

# THE ARGOSY.

FEBRUARY 1, 1868.

ANNE HEREFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

## CHAPTER V.

### ANOTHER DREAM.

"IF ever I heard the like of that! One won't be able to open one's lips next before you, Miss Hereford. Did I say anything about her dying, pray? Or about your dying? Or my dying? Time enough to snap me up when I do."

Thus spoke *Jemima*, with a volubility that nearly took her breath away. She had come to my room in the morning with the news that *Mrs. Edwin Barley* was worse. I burst into tears, and asked if she were going to die, which brought forth the above rebuke.

"My thoughts were running upon whether we servants should have mourning given us for young *Mr. King*," resumed *Jemima*, as if she were bent upon removing unpleasant impressions from my mind. "Now just you make haste and dress yourself, Miss Hereford—*Mrs. Edwin Barley* has been asking for you."

I made haste; *Jemima* helped; and she ushered me to the door of the sick-room, halting to whisper a parting word.

"Don't you begin crying again, miss. Your aunt is no more going to die than I am."

The first words spoken by *Mrs. Edwin Barley* were a contradiction to this, curious coincident that it may seem. She was lying very high on the frilled white pillows, no cap on, her cheeks hectic, and her lovely golden hair falling around her head. A large bright fire burned in the grate, and a small tray, with a white cloth and cup on it, stood on the table near.

"Child," she began, holding out her hand to me, "I fear I am about to be taken from you."

I did not answer; I did not cry; all tears seemed scared away then. It was a confirmation of my secret, inward fears, and my face turned white.

"What was that you said to me about the Keppe-Carews never dying without a warning? And I laughed at you! Do you remember? Anne, I think the warning came to me last night."

I glanced timidly round the room. It was a luxurious bed-chamber, costly furniture and pretty toilette trifles everywhere. The crimson silk curtains were drawn closely before the bay-window, and I could see Selina clearly in the semi-light.

"Your mamma told you she had a dream, Anne. Well, I have had a dream. And yet I feel sure it was not a dream, but reality, reality. She appeared to me last night."

"Who? Mamma?"

"Your mamma. The Carew superstition is, that when one is going to die, the last relative, whether near or distant, who has been taken from them by death, comes again to give them notice that their own departure is near. Ursula was the last who went, and she came to me in the night."

"It can't be true," I sobbed, shivering from head to foot.

"She stood there, in the faint rays of the shaded lamp," pursued Selina, not so much as listening to me. "I have not really slept all night; I have been in that semi-conscious, dozing state when the mind is awake both to dreams and to reality, knowing not which is which. Just as the clock struck two I awoke partially from one of these semi-dreams, and I saw your mamma at the foot of the bed—a shadowy sort of figure and face, but I knew it for Ursula's. She just looked at me and said, 'Selina!' Then I woke up thoroughly—the name, the sound of her well-remembered voice ringing in my ears."

"And seeing her?" I eagerly asked.

"No. Seeing nothing but the opening between the curtains at the foot of the bed and the door beyond it; nothing more than is to be seen now."

"Then, Selina, it was a dream after all?"

"In one sense, yes. The world would call it so. To me it was something more. A minute afterwards the clock struck two, and I was as wide awake as I am now."

The reaction came, and I burst into tears. "Selina! it was a dream; it could only have been a dream!"

"I should no doubt think so, Anne, but for what you told me of your mamma's warning. But for hearing that, I might never have remembered that such a thing is said to follow the Keppe-Carews."

What with remorse for having told her, though charged by my mother to do it, and what with my own fears, I could not speak for hysterical sobbing.

"You stupid little sensitive thing!" exclaimed Selina, with a touch of her old lightness; "perhaps in a week's time I shall be well, and running about out of doors with you. Go you down to Charlotte Delves's parlour, and get your breakfast, and then come to me again. I want you to go on an errand for me; but don't say so. Mind that, Anne."

"No, no; I'll not say it, Selina."

"Tell them to give you some honey."

They brought the honey and set out other good things for me in Miss Delves's parlour, but I could not eat: Charlotte Delves was very kind. Both the doctors came in. I watched them into the house; I watched them down stairs again. The physician from Nettleby went straight out: Mr. Lowe came to the parlour.

"My dear," he said to me, "you are to go up to Mrs. Edwin Barley."

"Is she much worse, sir?" I lingered to ask.

"I can hardly say how she is," was his answer. "We must hope for the best."

He stayed in the room himself, and shut the door while he talked to Miss Delves. The hall-clock struck ten as I passed under it, making me start. The hall was clear to-day, and the window and door stood a little open. Jemima told me that Philip King was in a sitting-room at the back, one that was rarely used. I ran quickly up to Selina's chamber. Mr. Edwin Barley was in it, to my dismay. He turned to leave it when I went in, and put his hand kindly enough upon my hair.

"You look pale, little one; you should run out of doors for a while."

His wife watched him from the room with her strangely-altered eyes, and then beckoned to me.

"Shut the door, and bolt it, Anne." And very glad I felt to do it. It was impossible to overcome my fear of Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Do you think you could find your way to Hallam?"

"I dare say I could, aunt."

"Selina, call me Selina," she impatiently interposed. "Call it me to the last."

To the last!

"You remember the way you came from Nettleby, Anne? In going out at the gates by the lodge, Nettleby lies on your left hand, Hallam on your right. You understand?"

"Oh, quite."

"You have only to turn to the right, and keep straight along the high-road; in a short time you come to Hallam village. The way is not at all lonely; cottages and houses are scattered all along it."

"I am sure I could go quite easily, Selina."

"Then put your things on, and take this note," she said, giving me a little piece of paper twisted up. "In going down Hallam Street, you

will see on the left hand a house standing by itself, with 'Mr. Gregg, Attorney at Law,' on a plate on the door. Go in, ask to see Mr. Gregg alone, and give him that note. But mind, Anne, you are not to speak of this to any one. Should Mr. Edwin Barley or any one else meet you, and inquire where you are going, say only that you are walking out. Do you fully understand?"

"Yes."

"Hide the note, so that no one sees it, and give it into Mr. Gregg's hands. Tell him I hope he will comprehend it, but that I was too ill to write it more elaborately."

No one noticed me as I left the house, and I pursued the road to Hallam, my head and thoughts full. Suppose Mr. Edwin Barley *should* meet and question me! I knew that I should make a poor hand at deception: besides being naturally open, mamma had brought me up to be so very candid and truthful. I had crushed the note inside my glove, having no better place of concealment—suppose he should seize my hand and find it! And if the gentleman I was going to see should not be at home, what was I to do then? Bring the note back to Selina, or leave it? I ought to have asked her.

"Well, my little maid, and where are you off to?"

The salutation proceeded from Mr. Martin, who had come right upon me at a turning of the road. My face grew hot as I answered him.

"I am out for a walk, sir."

"But this is rather far to come alone. You are close upon Hallam."

"My Aunt Selina knows it, sir," I said, trembling lest he should stop me, or order me to walk back with him.

"Oh, very well," he answered, good-naturedly. "How is she to-day?"

"She is not any better, sir," I replied. And he left me, telling me I was not to lose myself.

I came to the houses, straggling at first, but soon contiguous to each other, as they are in most streets. Mr. Gregg's stood alone, its plate on the door. A young man came running out of it as I stood hesitating whether to knock or ring.

"If you please, is Mr. Gregg at home?"

"Yes," answered he. "He is in the office. You can go in if you want him."

Opening an inner door, he showed me into a room where there seemed to be a confused mass of faces. In reality there might have been three or four, but they multiplied themselves to my timid eyes.

"A little girl wants to see Mr. Gregg," said the young man.

A tall gentleman came forward, with a pale face and gray whiskers. He said he was Mr. Gregg, and asked what my business was.

"I want to see you by yourself, if you please, sir."



He led the way to another room, and I took the note out of my glove and gave it him. He read it over—to me it appeared a long one—looked at me, and then read it again.

"Are you Anne Hereford?"

"Yes," I said, wondering how he knew my name. "My aunt, Mrs. Edwin Barley, bade me say she was too ill to write it better, but she hoped you would understand it."

"Is she so ill as to be in danger?"

"I am afraid so."

He still looked at me, and twirled the note in his fingers. I could see that it was written with a pencil.

"Do you know the purport of this?" he inquired, pointing to the note.

"No, sir."

"Did you not read it coming along? It was not sealed."

"Oh, no. I did not take it out of my glove."

"Well—tell Mrs. Edwin Barley that I perfectly understand, and shall immediately obey her: tell her all will be ready by the time she sends to me. And—stay a bit. Have you any Christian name besides Anne?"

"My name is Anne Ursula."

"And what was your father's name? And what your mother's?"

"Papa's was Thomas, and mamma's Ursula," I answered, wondering very much.

He wrote down the names, asked a few more questions, and then showed me out at the street-door, giving a parting injunction that I was not to forget the words of his message to Mrs. Edwin Barley, and not to mention abroad that I had been to his office.

Reaching home without hindrance, I was about to enter the sick-room, when Miss Delves softly called to me from the upper stairs: Mrs. Edwin Barley was sleeping, and must not be disturbed. So I went higher up to take my things off, and Charlotte Delves asked me into her chamber—a very nice one, immediately over Mrs. Edwin Barley's.

"Tread softly, my dear. If she can only sleep, it will do her good."

I would not tread at all, though the carpet was thick and soft, but sat down on the first chair. Miss Delves was changing her cap. She wore very nice ones always.

"Miss Delves, I wish you'd please to tell me. Do you think my aunt will get well?"

"It is to be hoped so," was the answer. "But Mr. Edwin Barley is fretting himself to fiddle-strings over it."

"Do *you* think she will?"

Miss Delves was combing out her long flaxen curls; bright thick curls they were; very smooth. She twirled two round her finger before she answered.

"Yes, I think she will. It is true that she is very ill—very; but, on the other hand, she has youth in her favour."

"Is she dangerously ill?"

"No doubt. But how many people are there, lying in danger daily, who recover! The worst of it is, she is so excited, so restless: the doctors don't like that. It is not to be wondered at, with this trouble in the house: she could not have fallen ill at a more unfortunate time. I think she has a good constitution."

"Mamma used to say that all the Carews had that. They were in general long-lived."

Charlotte Delves looked round at me. "Your mamma was not long-lived. She died young—so to say."

"But mamma's illness came on first from an accident. She was hurt in India. Oh, Miss Delves! can't anything be done to cure my Aunt Selina?"

"My dear, everything will be done that it is possible to do. The doctors talk of the shock to the system; but, as I say, she is young. You must not be too anxious; it would answer no end. Had you a nice walk this morning?"

"Yes."

She finished her hair, and put on the pretty cap, its rich lace lappets falling behind. Then she took up her watch and chain, and looked out at the window as she put them round her neck.

"Here's a policeman coming to the house! I wonder what he wants?"

"Has there been any news yet of George Heneage?"

"None," she answered. "Heneage Grange is being watched."

"Is that where he lives?"

"It is his father's place."

"And is it near to here?"

"Oh, no. More than a hundred miles away. The police think it not improbable that he escaped there at once. The Grange has been searched for him, we hear, unsuccessfully. But the police are by no means sure that he is not concealed there, and they have set a watch."

"Oh dear! I hope they will not find him!"

I said it with a shudder. The finding of George Heneage seemed to promise I knew not what renewal of horror. Charlotte Delves turned her eyes upon me in astonishment and reproof.

"You hope they will not find him! You cannot know what you are saying, Miss Hereford. I think I would give half the good that is left in my life to have him found—and hung. What right had he to take that poor young man's life? or to bring this shocking trouble into a gentleman's family?"

Very true. Of course he had none.

"Mr. Edwin Barley has taken a vow to track him out; and he will be sure to do it, sooner or later. We will go down, Miss Hereford."

The policeman had not come upon the business at all, but about some poaching matter. Mr. Edwin Barley came out of his wife's room as we were creeping by it. Charlotte Delves asked if Mrs. Edwin was awake?

"Awake? Yes! and in a fine excitable state," he answered, irritably. "She does not sleep three minutes together. It is giving herself no chance of recovery. She has got it in her head now that she's going to die, and has sent for Martin."

He strode down to the waiting policeman. Charlotte Delves went into Mrs. Edwin Barley's room, and took me. Selina's cheeks were still hectic with fever; her blue eyes bright and wild.

"If you would but try to calm yourself, Mrs. Edwin Barley!"

"I am as calm as I can expect to be," was her answer, given with some petulance. "My husband need not talk; he's worse than I am. He says now the doctors are treating me wrongly, and that he shall call in a fresh one. I suppose I shall die between them."

"I wish I knew what would soothe you," spoke Charlotte Delves, in a kind, pleasant voice.

"I'm very thirsty; I've drank all the lemonade; you can fetch me up some more. Anne, do you stay here."

Charlotte Delves took down the lemonade waiter, and Selina drew me to her. "The message, Anne!—the message! Did you see Mr. Gregg?"

I gave her the message as I had received it. It was well, she said, and turned away from me in her restlessness.

And again a day passed on, bringing no change.

I had another walk to Hallam on the Friday. Philip King's funeral was to be on the Saturday, and the walk appeared to have some connection with that event. Selina sent no note this time, but a mysterious message.

"See Mr. Gregg alone as before, Anne," were the orders. "Tell him that the funeral is fixed for eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, and he must be at hand, and watch his time. You can mention that I am now too ill to write."

"Tell him—what do you say, Selina?"

"Exactly what I have told you; he will understand, though you do not. Why do you make me speak? I send you in preference to a servant on this private business."

I did not see Selina again that day. It was said in the household that she was a trifle better. Mr. Edwin Barley had been as good as his word, and a third doctor attended now, a solemn old gentleman in black dress clothes and gold spectacles. It transpired, no one but Miss Delves knowing with what truth, that he agreed with his two brethren in the treatment they had pursued.

Saturday morning. The house woke up to a quiet bustle. People

were going and coming, servants were moving about and preparing, all in a subdued, decorous manner. The servants had been put in mourning,—Mr. Edwin Barley was all in black, and Charlotte Delves rustled from room to room in rich black silk. Philip King had been related to her in a very distant degree. Mrs. Edwin Barley was no worse; better, if anything, the doctors said. From what could be gathered by us, who were not doctors, the throat was a trifle better; she herself weaker.

The funeral was late. The clocks were striking eleven as it wound down the avenue on its way to the church; an old-fashioned little structure, situate at right angles between the house and Hallam. In the first black chariot sat the clergyman, Mr. Martin; then followed the hearse; then two mourning-coaches. In the first were Mr. Edwin Barley, his brother, and two gentlemen whom I did not know—they were the mourners; in the other were the six pall-bearers. Some men walked in hat-bands, and the carriages were drawn by four horses, bearing plumes.

"Is it out of sight, Anne?"

The questioner was my aunt, for it was at her window I stood, peeping beside the blind. It had been out of sight some minutes, I told her, and must have passed the lodge.

"Then you go down-stairs, Anne, and open the hall-door. Stand there until Mr. Gregg comes; he will have a clerk with him: bring them up here. Do all this quietly, child."

In five minutes Mr. Gregg came, a young man accompanying him. I shut the hall-door and took them up-stairs. They trod so softly! just as though they would avoid being heard. Selina held out her hand to Mr. Gregg.

"How are you to-day, Mrs. Barley?"

"They say I am better," she replied; "I hope I am. Is it quite ready?"

"Quite," said he, taking a parchment from one of his pockets. "You will hear it read?"

"Yes; that I may see whether you understood my imperfect letter. I hope it is not long. The church, you know, is not so far off; they will be back soon."

"It is quite short," Mr. Gregg replied, having bent his ear to catch her speech, for she spoke low and imperfectly. "Where shall my clerk wait while I read it?"

She sent us into her dressing-room, the clerk and I, whence we could hear Mr. Gregg's voice slowly reading something, but could not distinguish the words or sense; once I caught the name "*Anne Ursula Hereford.*" And then we were called in again.

"Anne, go down-stairs and find *Jemima*," were the next orders. "Bring her up here."

"Is it to give her her medicine?" asked Jemima, as she followed me up.

"I don't know."

"My girl," began the attorney to Jemima, "can you be discreet, and hold your tongue?"

Jemima stared very much: first at seeing them there, next at the question. She gave no answer in her surprise, and Mrs. Edwin Barley made a sign that she should come close to her.

"Jemima, I am sure you know that I have been a good mistress to you, and I ask you to render me a slight service in return. In my present state of health, I have thought it necessary to make my will; to devise away the trifle of property I possess of my own. I am about to sign it, and you and Mr. Gregg's clerk will witness my signature. The service I require of you is, that you will not speak of this to any one. Can I rely upon you?"

"Yes, ma'am, certainly you may," replied the servant, speaking in an earnest tone: and she evidently meant to keep her word honestly.

"And my clerk I have answered to you for," put in Mr. Gregg, as he raised Mrs. Barley and placed the open parchment before her.

She signed her name, "Selina Barley;" the clerk signed his, "William Dixon;" and Jemima hers, "Jemima Lea." Mr. Gregg remarked that Jemima's writing *might* be read, and it was as much as could be said of it. She quitted the room, and soon afterwards Mr. Gregg and his clerk took their departure in the same quiet manner that they had come.

I was closing the hall-door after them, when the sound of silk, rustling up, fell on my startled ears, and Charlotte Delves stepped into the hall from one of the passages. She had been shut up in her parlour.

"Who is it that has gone out?"

But I was already half way up to Selina's room, and would not hear. Miss Delves opened the door and looked after them. And at that moment Jemima appeared. Charlotte Delves laid hold of her, and no doubt turned her inside out.

"Anne, my dear, if I die you are now provided for. At least ——"

"Oh, Selina! Selina! You cannot be going to die!"

"Perhaps not. I hope not. Yes, I do hope it, Anne, in spite of my fancied warning—which, I suppose, was only a dream, after all. My mind must have dwelt on what you said about Ursula. If you ever relate to me anything of the sort again, Anne, I'll beat you."

I stood conscience-stricken. But in telling her what I did, I had only obeyed my mother. I like to repeat this over and over.

"At least, as well provided for as I have it in my power to provide," she continued, just as though there had been no interruption. "I have left you my four thousand pounds. It is out at good interest—five per cent.; and I have directed it to accumulate until you are eighteen. Then it goes to you. This will just keep you; just be enough to keep

you from going out as a governess. If I live, you will have your home with me after leaving school. Of course, that governess scheme was all a farce; Ursula could only have meant it as such. The world would stare to see a governess in a grand-daughter of Carew of Keppe Carew."

The will lay on the bed. She told me to lock it up in the opposite cabinet, taking the keys from underneath the pillow, and I obeyed her. By her directions, I took the cabinet key off the bunch, locked it up alone in a drawer, and she returned the bunch underneath her pillow. By that time she could not speak at all. Charlotte Delves, who came up, asked what she had been doing to reduce herself like that.

It was a miserable day. Mr. Edwin Barley did not seem to know what to do with himself, and the other people had gone home. Mr. Martin was alone with Selina for a portion of the afternoon. In the evening she appeared considerably better. She sat up in bed, and ate a few spoonfuls of arrow-root. Mr. Edwin Barley, who was in the arm-chair near the fire, said it was poor stuff, and she ought to take either brandy or wine, or both.

"Let me give you some in that, Selina," he cried. And indeed he had been wanting to give it her all along.

"I should be afraid to take it; don't tease me," she feebly answered, and it was astonishing how low her voice was getting. "You know what the doctors say, Edwin. When once the inflammation (or whatever it is) in the throat has passed, then I may be fed up every hour. Perhaps they will let me begin to-morrow."

"If they don't mind, they'll keep you so low that—that we shall have to give you a bottle of brandy a-day." I think the concluding words, after the pause, had been quite changed from what he had been going to say, and he spoke half-jokingly. "I know that the proper treatment for you would have been stimulants. I told Lowe so again to-day, but he would not have it. But for one thing, I'd take the case into my own hands, and give you a wine-glass of brandy now."

"And that one thing?" she asked, in her scarcely perceptible voice.

"The doubt that I *might* do wrong."

Jemima appeared at the door with a candle: it was my signal. Selina kissed me twice, and said she should be up on the morrow. I went round to Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Good night, sir."

"Is it your bed-time, child? Good night."



CHAPTER VI.

DEAD !

EIGHT o'clock the next morning, and the church-bells ringing out on the sunshiny air ! Everything looked joyous as I drew up the blind—kept down for a week previously. I dressed myself, without waiting for *Jemima*, in my Sunday frock, with its deep crape trimmings. The house would be open again to-day ; *Selina* be sitting up.

I scrambled over my dressing ; I fear I scrambled over my prayers. Everything was so still below I thought they had forgotten me. Going down, I knocked at *Selina's* door, and was waiting to hear her answer, when one of the maids came running up the stairs in a flurry. It was *Sarah*.

"You cannot go in there, Miss Hereford."

"I want to see how my aunt is."

"Oh, she—she—you must not go in, miss, I say. Your aunt cannot see you just now ; you must please go down into Miss Delves's parlour."

I dropped the handle of the door in obedience, and went down a few steps. *Sarah* went on to the upper flights. But the girl's manner had alarmed me ; and, without any thought of doing wrong, I softly opened the door. The curtains were drawn closely round the bed.

"Are you worse, *Selina* ?"

No reply came, and I feared she was worse. Perhaps lying with leeches to her throat ? I had seen leeches to a throat once, and had never forgotten the sight. At that moment the appearance of the room struck upon me as strange. *It seemed to have been put to rights.* I pulled open the curtain in full dread of the leeches.

Alas ! it was not leeches I saw ; but a still, white face. The face of my Aunt *Selina*, it is true, but—dead. I shrieked out, in my shock of terror, and flew into the arms of *Sarah*, who came running in.

"What is the matter ?" exclaimed *Charlotte Delves*, flying up to the landing where we stood.

"Why, Miss Hereford has been in there ; and I told her not to go !" answered *Sarah*, hushing my face to her as she spoke. "Why couldn't you listen to me, miss ?"

"I didn't know Miss Hereford was up ; she should have waited for *Jemima*," said *Charlotte Delves*, as she laid hold of me, and led me down to her parlour.

"Oh, Miss Delves, Miss Delves, what is it ?" I sobbed. "Is she really dead ?"

"She is dead, all too certain, my dear. But I am very sorry you should have gone in. It is just like *Jemima's* carelessness !"

"What's that?—that's like my carelessness, Miss Delves?" resentfully inquired *Jemima*, who had come forward on hearing the noise.

"Why, your suffering this child to dress herself alone, and go about the house at large. One would think you might have been attentive this morning, of all others."

"I went up just before eight, and she was asleep," answered *Jemima*, with as pert an accent as she dared to use. "Who was to imagine she'd awake and be down so soon?"

"Why did she die? what killed her?" I asked, my sobs choking me. "Dead! *dead!* My Aunt *Selina* dead!"

"She was taken worse at eleven o'clock last night, and Mr. *Lowe* was sent for," explained *Charlotte Delves*. "He could do nothing, and she died at two."

"Where was Mr. *Edwin Barley*?"

"He was with her."

"Not when she was taken worse," interposed *Jemima*. "I was with her alone. It was my turn to sit up, and she had spoken quite cheerfully to me. Before settling myself in the arm-chair, I went to see if she had dropped asleep. My patience!—my heart went pit-a-pat at the change in her. I ran for Mr. *Edwin Barley*, and he came in. Mr. *Lowe* was sent for: everything was done, but she could not be saved."

I turned to *Charlotte Delves* in my sad distress. "She was so much better last night," I said, imploringly. "She was getting well."

"It was a deceitful improvement," replied *Charlotte Delves*—and she seemed really sad and grieved. "Lowe said he could have told us so had he been here. Mr. *Edwin Barley* quite flew out at him, avowing his belief that it was the medical treatment that had killed her."

"And was it?" I eagerly asked, as if, the point ascertained, it could bring her back to life. "Do they know what she died of?"

"As to knowing, I don't think any of them know too much," answered *Charlotte Delves*. "The doctors say the disorder, together with the shock her system had received, could not be subdued. Mr. *Edwin Barley* says it could have been, under a different treatment. *Lowe* tells me now he had little hope from the first."

"And couldn't open his lips to say so!" interposed *Jemima*. "It's just like those doctors. The master is dreadfully cut up."

They tried to make me take some breakfast, but I could neither eat nor drink. *Jemima* said they had had theirs "ages ago." None of the household had been to bed since the alarm.

"All I know is, that if blame lies anywhere it is with the doctors," observed *Charlotte Delves*, as she pressed me to eat. "Every direction they gave was minutely followed."

"Why did nobody fetch me down to see her?"

"Child, she never asked for you; she was past thinking of things. And to you it would only have been a painful sight."

"That's true," added Jemima. "When I looked at her, all unconcerned, I saw death in her face. It frightened me, I can tell you. I ran to call the master, thinking ——"

"Thinking what?" spoke Charlotte Delves, for Jemima had made a sudden pause.

"Nothing particular, Miss Delves. Only that something which had happened in the day was odd," added Jemima, glancing significantly at me. "The master was in his room half undressed, and he came rushing after me just as he was. The minute he looked on her he murmured that she was dying, and sent off a man for Mr. Lowe, and another for the old doctor from Nettleby. Lowe came at once, but the other did not get here till it was over. She died at two."

Jemima would have told me the details for ever. I felt sick as I listened. Even now, as I write, a sort of sickness of remembrance comes over me. I wandered into the hall, and was sobbing, with my head against the dining-room door-post, not knowing any one was there, when Mr. Edwin Barley gently unlatched the door and looked out.

He had been weeping, as was easy to be seen. His eyes were red—his air and manner subdued; but my acquired fear of him was in full force, and I would rather have gone away than been drawn in.

"Child, don't cry so."

"I never took leave of her, sir. I did not see her before she died."

"If weeping tears of blood would bring her back to life, she'd be here again," he responded, almost fiercely. "They have killed her between them; they have, Anne; and, by heavens! if there was any law to touch them, they should feel it."

"Who, sir?"

"The doctors. And precious doctors they have proved themselves! Why do you tremble so, child? They have not understood the disorder from the first: it is one requiring the utmost possible help from stimulants; otherwise the system cannot battle with it. They gave her none; they kept her upon water, and—she is lying there? Oh! that I had done as it perpetually crossed my mind to do!" he continued, clasping his hands together in anguish; "that I had taken her treatment upon myself, risking the responsibility! She would have been living now!"

If ever a man spoke the genuine sentiments of his heart, Mr. Edwin Barley appeared to do so then, and a little bit of my dislike of him subsided—just a shade of it, no more.

"I am sorry you should have come into the house at this time, my poor child; some spell seems to have been upon it ever since. Go now to Charlotte Delves; tell her I say she is to take good care of you."

He shut himself in again as I went away. Oh, the restless day! the miserable day! That, and the one of mamma's death remain still upon my memory as the two sad epochs of my life, standing out conspicuously in their bitterness.

Moving about the house restlessly; shedding tears by turns; leaning my head on the sofa in Miss Delves's parlour! She was very kind to me; but what was any kindness to me then? It seemed to me that I could never, never be happy again. I had so loved Selina!

I wanted to see her again. It was almost as if I had *not* seen her in the morning, for the shock of surprise had startled away my senses. I had looked upon mamma so many times after death, that the customary dread of childhood at such sights lingered but little with me. And I began to watch for an opportunity to go in.

It came at twilight. In passing the room I saw the door open, and supposed some of the maids might be there. In I went, bravely; and passed round to the far side of the bed, nearest to the window and the fading light.

But I had not courage to draw aside the curtain quite at first, and sat down for a moment in the low chair by the bed's head, to wait until courage came. Some one else came first; and that was Mr. Edwin Barley.

He walked slowly in, carrying a candle, startling me nearly to sickness. His slippers were light, and I had not heard his approach. It must have been he who had left the door open, probably having been to fetch the very candle in his hand. He did not come near the bed, at least on the side where I was, but seemed to be searching for something; looking about, opening two or three drawers. I sat cowering, feeling I had no business to be there; my heart was in my mouth when he went to the door and called Charlotte Delves.

"Where are my wife's keys?" he inquired, as she came up.

"I do not know," was her answer; and she began to look about the room as he had previously done. "They must be somewhere."

"Not know! But it was your place to take possession of them, Charlotte. I want to examine her desk; there may be directions left in it, for all I can tell."

"I really forgot all about the keys," Charlotte Delves deprecatingly said. "I will ask the women who were here. Why! here they are; in this china basket on the mantelpiece," she suddenly exclaimed. "I knew they could not be far off."

Mr. Edwin Barley took the keys, and went out, the desk under his arm. Charlotte followed him, and closed the door. But I was too much scared to attempt to remain; I softly opened it, and stole out after them, waiting against the wall in the shade. They had halted at the door of Mr. Barley's study, half way down the stairs, and were talking in subdued tones. Charlotte Delves was telling him of the lawyer's visit on the previous day.

"I did not mention it before," she observed: "of course, while poor Mrs. Edwin was here, it was not my business to report on anything she might do, and to-day has had too much trouble in it. But there's

no doubt that Gregg was here, and a clerk with him. Little Miss Hereford showed them out, and I suppose admitted them. It was an odd time to choose for the visit—the hour of the funeral.”

Can you imagine how terrified I felt as Charlotte Delves related this? I had done no wrong; I had simply obeyed the orders of Mrs. Edwin Barley; but it was uncertain what amount of blame her husband might lay to my share, and how he would punish it.

“It is strange what Gregg could be doing here at that time with a clerk; and in private, as you appear to assume,” said Mr. Edwin Barley. “Could he have come by appointment, to transact any legal business for Selina?”

“But if so, why should she wish it kept from you?” and Charlotte Delves’s voice had a jealous ring in it: jealous for the rights of her cousin, Edwin Barley.

“I don’t know. The little girl may be able to explain. Call her up.”

Another fright for me. But the next moment his voice countermanded the order.

“Never mind, Charlotte; let it be. When I want information of Anne Hereford, I’ll question her myself. And if Selina did anything, made a will, or gave Gregg any other directions, we shall soon know of it.”

“Made a will!” exclaimed Charlotte Delves.

“I should not think it likely that she would, but she could do it; she was of age,” replied Mr. Barley.

He went into his study with the desk, and Charlotte Delves passed down stairs. I got into her parlour as soon as she did; never having seen my dear Aunt Selina.

But they took me to see her the next day, when she was in her first coffin. She looked very calm and peaceful: but I think the dead, generally speaking, do look peaceful: whether they have died a happy death or not. A few autumn flowers were strewed upon her flannel shroud.

In coming out of the room, my face streaming with tears, there stood Mr. Lowe.

“Oh, sir!” I cried, in my burst of grief, “what made her die? Could you not have saved her?”

“My little girl, what she really died of was exhaustion,” he answered. “The disease took hold of her, and she could not rally from it. As to saving her—God alone could have done that.”

There was no inquest this time. The doctors certified to some cause of death. The house was more closely shut up than before; the servants went about speaking in whispers; deeper mourning was prepared for them. In Selina’s desk a paper had been found by Mr. Edwin Barley—a few pencilled directions on it, should she “unhappily die.” Therefore the prevision of death had been really upon her. She



named two or three persons whom she should wish to attend her funeral, Mr. Gregg being one of them.

Saturday again, and another funeral! Ever since, even to this hour, Saturdays and funerals have been connected together in my impressionable mind. I had a pleasant dream early that morning. I saw Selina in bright white robes, looking peacefully happy, saying that her sins had been washed away by Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. I had sobbed myself to sleep, hoping that they had.

It was fixed for twelve o'clock this time. The long procession, longer than the other one had been, wound down the avenue. Mr. Edwin Barley went in a coach by himself; perhaps he did not like to be seen grieving; and three or four coaches followed it. There was not a dry eye amidst the household—us who were left at home—with the exception of Charlotte Delves. I did not see her weep at all, then or previously. The narrow crape tucks on her gown were exchanged for wide ones, and some black love-ribbon mingled with her hair. I sobbed till they came back, sitting by myself in the dining-room.

It was the very room they filed into, those who entered. A formidable array, in their sweeping scarves and hat-bands; too formidable for me to pass, and I shrunk into the far corner, between the sideboard and the dumb-waiter. But they began to leave again, only just saying good day in a low tone to Mr. Edwin Barley, and got into the coaches that waited. Mr. Gregg, the lawyer, remained, and Mr. Barley of the Oaks.

"Pardon me that I stay," observed the lawyer to Mr. Edwin Barley; "I am but obeying the request of your late wife. She charged me, in the event of her death, to stay and read the will after the funeral."

"The will!" echoed Mr. Edwin Barley.

"She made a will just before she died. She gave me instructions for it privately; though what her motives for keeping it a secret were, she did not state. It was executed on the day previous to her death."

"This is news to me," observed Mr. Edwin Barley. "Do you hold the will?"

"No, I left it with her. You had better remain, my little girl," the lawyer added to me, touching my arm with his black glove as I was essaying to quit the room. "The will concerns you. I asked your wife, sir, if I should take possession of it, but she preferred to keep it herself."

"I do not know where it can have been put, then," returned Mr. Edwin Barley. "I have examined her desk and one or two of her drawers where she kept papers; but I have found no will."

"Perhaps you did not look particularly for a will, not knowing she had made one, and so it may have escaped your notice, sir," suggested the lawyer.

"Pardon me; it was the precise thing I looked for. I heard of your visit to my wife; not, however, until after her death; and it struck me



that your coming might have reference to something of the sort. But I found no will; only a few pencilled words on a half-sheet of paper in her desk. Do you know where it was put?"

The lawyer turned to me. "Perhaps this little lady may know," he said. "She made one in the room when I was with Mrs. Edwin Barley, and may have seen afterwards where the will was placed."

Again I felt sick with apprehension: few children at my age have ever been so shy and sensitive. It seemed to me that all was coming out; at any rate, my share in it. But I spoke pretty bravely.

"You mean the paper that you left on my Aunt Selina's bed, sir? I put it in the cabinet; she directed me to do so."

"In the cabinet?" repeated Mr. Edwin Barley to me.

"Yes, sir. Just inside as you open it."

"Will you go with me to search for it?" said Mr. Edwin Barley to the lawyer. "And you can go into Miss Delves's parlour, Anne; little girls are better out of these affairs."

"Pardon me," dissented Mr. Gregg. "Miss Hereford, as the only interested party, had better remain. And if she can show us where the will is, it will save time."

Mr. Edwin Barley looked as if he meant to object, but did not. "The child's nerves have been unhinged," he said to the lawyer as we went up stairs.

The key of the cabinet lay in the corner of the drawer where I had placed it. Mr. Edwin Barley took it from me and opened the cabinet. But no will was to be seen.

"I did not think of looking here," he observed; "my wife never used the cabinet, to my knowledge. There is no will here."

There was no will anywhere, apparently. Drawers were opened; her desk, standing now on the drawers, was searched; all without effect.

"It is very extraordinary," said Mr. Gregg.

"I can only come to one conclusion—that my wife must have destroyed it herself. It is true, the keys were lying about for several hours subsequent to her death, at anybody's command; but who would steal a will?"

"I do not suppose Mrs. Edwin Barley would destroy it," dissented Mr. Gregg. "Nothing can be more improbable. She expressed her happiness at having been able to make a will; her great satisfaction. Who left the keys about, sir?"

"The blame of that lies with Charlotte Delves. It escaped her memory to secure them, she tells me: and in the confusion of the sudden blow, it is not to be wondered at. But and if the keys were left about? I have honest people in my house, Mr. Gregg."

"Who benefited by the will?" asked Mr. Barley of the Oaks, he having intruded on the search, and was looking on with a face of puzzled concern. "Who comes into the money, Gregg?"

"This little girl, Anne Ursula Hereford. Mrs. Edwin Barley bequeathed to her the whole of her money, and her trinkets, except the trinkets that had been your own gift to her, Mr. Edwin Barley." And he proceeded to detail the provisions of the short will. "In fact, she left to Miss Hereford everything she had to leave. It is most strange where the will can be."

"It is more than strange," observed Mr. Edwin Barley. "Why did she wish to make it in secret?"

"I have told you, sir, that she did not say why."

"But can't you form an idea why?"

"It occurred to me that she thought you might not like her leaving all she had away from you and might have feared you would interfere."

"No," he quietly said, "I should not have done that. Every wish that she confided to me should have been scrupulously carried out."

"Oh, but come, you know! a big sheet of parchment, sealed and inscribed, can't vanish in this way," exclaimed Mr. Barley of the Oaks. "It must be somewhere in the room."

It might be, but nobody could find it. Mr. Barley of the Oaks got quite excited and angry. He went to the door, calling out for Miss Delves.

"Charlotte, come up here. Do you hear, Charlotte?"

She ran up quickly, evidently wondering.

"Look here," cried Mr. Barley, "Mrs. Edwin's will can't be found. It was left in this cabinet, my brother is told."

"Oh, then, Mrs. Edwin did make a will?" was the response of Charlotte Delves.

"Yes; but it is gone," repeated Mr. Barley of the Oaks.

"It cannot be gone," said Charlotte. "If the will was left in the cabinet, there it would be now."

The old story was gone over again; nothing more. The will had been made, and as certainly placed there. The servants were honest, not capable of meddling with that or anything else. But there was no sign or symptom of a will left.

"It is very strange," exclaimed Mr. Edwin Barley, looking furtively from the corner of his black eyes at most of us in succession, as if we were in league against him or against the will. "I will have the house searched throughout."

but; was done that same evening. Himself, his brother, Mr. Gregg, and Charlotte Delves taking part in it. Entirely without success.

And in my busy heart there was running a conviction all the while that Mr. Edwin Barley had himself made away with it.

"Will you not act in accordance with its provisions, sir?" Mr. Gregg asked him as he was leaving.

"I do not think I shall," said Mr. Edwin Barley. "Produce the

will, and every behest in it shall be fulfilled. Failing a will, my wife's property becomes mine, and I shall act as I please by it."

The days went by; ten unhappy days. I spent most of my time with Miss Delves, seeing scarcely anything of Mr. Edwin Barley. Part of the time I think he was over at his brother's, but now and then I met him in the passages or the hall. He would give me a nod, and pass by. I cannot describe my state of feeling, or how miserable the house appeared to me: I was as one unsettled in it, as one who lived in constant discomfort, fear, and dread; though of what, I could not define. Jemima remarked one day that "Miss Hereford went about moithered, like a fish out of water."

The will did not turn up, and probably never would; neither was any clue given to the mystery of its disappearance. Meanwhile rumours of its loss grew rife in the household and in the neighbourhood: whether the lawyer talked, or whether Mr. Barley of the Oaks, and thus set them afloat, was uncertain, but it was thought to have been one or the other. I know I had said nothing; Charlotte Delves said she had not; neither, beyond doubt, had Mr. Edwin Barley. When an acquaintance once asked him whether the report was true, he answered Yes, it was true so far as that Mr. Gregg said his late wife had made a will, and it could not be found; but his own belief was, that she must have destroyed it again; he could not suspect any of the household would tamper with its mistress's private affairs.

One day Mr. Edwin Barley called me to him.

"Are you quite sure," he asked, in his sternest tone, "that you did not re-open the cabinet yourself, and do something with the parchment?"

"I never opened it again, sir. If I had, my aunt must have seen me. And I could not have done so," I added, recollecting myself, "for she kept the bunch of keys under her pillow."

"She was the only one, though, who knew where it was placed," muttered Mr. Edwin Barley to himself in allusion to me.

"It's a queer start about that will!" Jemima resentfully remarked that same night when she was undressing me. "And I don't half like it; I can tell you that, Miss Hereford. They may turn round on me next, and say I made away with it."

"That's not likely, Jemima. The will would not do you any good. Do you think it will ever be found?"

"It's to be hoped it will—with all this unpleasantness! I wish I never come within hearing of it, for my part. The day old Gregg and the young man were here, Charlotte Delves got hold of me, pumping me on this side, pumping me on that. Had they been up to Mrs. Edwin Barley? she asked; and what had their business been with her? She didn't get much out of me, but it made me as cross as two sticks. It is droll where the will can have gone! One can't suspect Mr. Edwin

Barley of touching it; and I don't; but the loss makes him all the richer. That's the way of the world," concluded Jemima: "the more money one has, the more one gets added to it. It is said that he comes into possession of forty thousand pounds by the death of Philip King."

The ten days' sojourn in the desolate house ended, and then Charlotte Delves told me I was to leave it. In consequence of the death of Selina, the trustees had assigned to Mrs. Hemson the task of choosing a school for me. Mrs. Hemson had fixed on one near to the town where she resided, Dashleigh; and I was to pass a week at Mrs. Hemson's house before entering it.

On the evening previous to my departure a message came from Mr. Edwin Barley that I was to go to him in the dining-room. Charlotte Delves smoothed my hair with her fingers, and sent me in. He was at dessert: fruit and wine were on the table; and John set a chair for me. Mr. Edwin Barley put some walnuts that he cracked and a bunch of grapes on my plate.

"Will you take some wine, little girl?"

"No, thank you, sir. I have just had tea."

Presently he put a small box into my hands. I remembered having seen it on Selina's dressing-table.

"It contains a few of your Aunt Selina's trinkets," he said. "All she brought here, except a necklace, which is of value, and will be forwarded with some of her more costly clothes to Mrs. Hemson for you. Do you think you can take care of these until you are of an age to wear them?"

"I will take great care of them, sir. I will lock them up in the little desk mamma gave me, and I wear the key of it round my neck."

"Mind you do take care of them," he rejoined, with suppressed emotion. "If I thought you would not, I would never give them to you. You must treasure them always. And these things, recollect, are of value," he added, touching the box; "they are not child's toys. Take them up-stairs, and put them in your trunk."

"If you please, sir, has the will been found?" I waited to ask.

"It has not. Why?"

"Because, sir, you asked me if I had taken it; you said I was the only one who knew where it had been put. Indeed, I would not have touched it for anything."

"Be easy, little girl. I believe my wife herself destroyed the will: I live in hopes of coming to the bottom of the mystery yet. As you have introduced the subject, you shall hear a word upon it from me. Busybodies have given me hints that I ought to carry out its substance in spite of the loss. I do not think so. The will, and what I hear connected with its making, has angered me, look you, Anne Hereford. Had my wife only breathed half a word to me that she wished you to have her money, every shilling should be yours. But I

don't like the underhand work that went on in regard to it, and shall hold it precisely as though it had never existed. If I ever relent in your favour, it will not be yet awhile."

"I did not know she was going to leave me anything, indeed, sir."

"Just so, little girl. But it was you who undertook the communications to Gregg, it seems, and admitted him when he came. You all acted as if I were an ogre, who would have prevented it. That's all, child. And now, good-bye: I shall not see you in the morning."

"Good-bye, sir," I answered. And he shook hands with me for the first time.

(To be continued.)

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## ROOM FOR HIS LORDSHIP.

A CHARADE.

BY THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

Room for his Lordship! up the street

Full stately roll the well-fed bays,

As, all in trim their chief to meet,

Our town its ghostly staff displays:

And thus, with ritual and procession,

My *first* is yielded in possession.

Room for his Lordship! through the crowd

The message all unheeded fares;

Amid the buzz of voices loud,

Not one perceives, and no one cares:

For men regard, in railway throng,

My *second* only, right or wrong.

Room for his Lordship! German spas

In vain have done their best to save;

So, grasped in Death's relentless claws,

He back must travel o'er the wave,

In oaken chest, a soulless thing,

Grim burden for my *third* to bring.

Room for his Lordship! where, and how?

His titles and his rank are past;

His splendid talents count not now,

For Heaven's own doom is come at last

Unless his soul be cleansed from sin,

Not e'en my *whole* will let him in.

## THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN ABYSSINIA.

BY ONE OF THE CAPTIVES.

THIS long period of suffering, if it has not made the captives wiser and better men, ought at least to have schooled them to such hardships, privations, and troubles, as, happily, seldom fall to the lot of civilized beings. Gallings chains, a narrow cell, and bullying guards, may be very dreadful in England; but those who have graduated in a Habesh prison become hardened, if not impervious, to the severity of such a discipline. Now and then, it is true, the clanking fetters press a little too much on the wasted ankles; but the pleasure, some may term it sad pleasure, of swathing the aching wounds, as far as the tight and massive rings permit, in soft well-worn rags, compensates for the transitory pain they produce. This indifference and insensibility to suffering, so long as it does not degenerate into a kind of criminal stoicism, is, perhaps, next to a confiding faith in an unerring Providence, the best antidote against that morbid brooding over events which no one could anticipate, and misfortune it was almost impossible to avert. The tyrant from the beginning so well arranged his plans, and concerted his subtle scheme, that the actors in the fearful drama were ignorant of the design, and the captives were consequently gulled by the smooth tongue of the crafty barbarian.

It is, however, of no use to retrace the past, and to dilate on wrongs that make the blood boil, and the head throb, and the heart turn sick with hope deferred. Thank God! the tide has turned, and a bow of hope glitters on the clouds which fling their dark shadows athwart the prison precincts.

It was in July, 1863, that the hypocritical despot (who told Mr. Rassam on his arrival that words could not express his gratitude to the English for having given Abyssinia the Bible in its vernacular tongue) rejoined, to the request of a missionary for a written order to exempt the Scriptures from the annoyance of the toll-collectors, "We are sick of the books, and don't want them." He was then in the year of his power; and in his presumptuous arrogance he imagined himself perfectly invincible.

Christia Agafer, and Alafa, near the Lake Tsana, had, on account of a suspected sympathy with the disaffected, been severely chastized; Alasnee, a chief under the Godjam rebel Tadla Gwalu, in a battle near Agow, had lost a considerable army; and Kasai, a lowland pretender to



the crown, was on his way to Gondar, when by the King's own hands he suffered the penalty of his treason. Success, then, everywhere attended the royal troops; and the infatuated man, in the flush of victory and triumph, almost began to believe that he was in reality the "Theodoros" (God's gift) of Ethiopian prophecy. His army, which then numbered more than 150,000 fighting warriors, was devoted to his interest, and implicitly obedient to his will. "I am the bareea (slave) of the Negus (king)," rung through the air from morning till night, and from night till morning; nay, the very adulations of some were so extravagant that they bordered on shuddering blasphemies.

The incense of flattery, so profusely offered before the shrine of the black Moloch, inflated his heart, and added a continual supply of fresh fuel to his insatiable lust of wealth, glory, and dominion. The poor peasants, who were already taxed beyond their limited means, had to submit to new exactions; and when goaded to desperation, a few here and there sought refuge from the spoliating despot's myrmidons in the ravines and hills of the lowlands. The entire district, or province, was pronounced disloyal, and mulcted in an amount that involved a general confiscation of property. Gondar had to suffer for none of these offences, but for others of equal magnitude. Although that province belonged to the Abuna (Metropolitan bishop), and was a prosperous place—a sin that royal justice could not allow to remain unpunished—the spacious houses of the Abuna must be plundered, the well-stored godahs (granaries) must supply the wants of the army; and even the church (consecrated to the mortal remains of successive Metropolitans), must be deprived of the priestly vestments and sacred vessels.

The love of rapine and plunder once instilled into the breast of the lawless savages, could not so easily be eradicated; and to find the means of gratifying his own craving will, it became indispensable to proscribe riches in the churchman and the people, and to show them that poverty in their case was no crime. This the whole of Dembea, down to the insalubrious valleys of the Soudan (the Egyptian border), had ere long experienced in its utmost rigour.

During the pillage no one was killed, but all the village shums (governors), were seized; and in order to extort money, subjected to the most excruciating tortures. Thus a whole region, renowned for the fertility of its soil and the luxuriance of its crops, was sacrificed to the rapacity of the capricious tyrant. Homes abounding with the comforts of life were ravaged and destroyed; fields waving with yellow harvests were torn up or trampled under foot; and pastures, swarming with grazing flocks and herds, were turned into deserts and untenanted wilds.

This unjustifiable spoliation of a fair and beautiful province, although greatly admired and applauded by the hungry legions of Tigré and Lasta, met with no approval among those whose country lay nearer, and might one day share a similar fate. Broundo (raw meat), hydrome-

(mead), and tinkling Maria Theresa dollars, have palliated the Negus's severity with his rapacious followers, and the groans, shrieks, and lamentations of tortured shums fell on the wakeful ear during the midnight hours, intermingling with the boisterous revelry of bragging and drunken soldiers, the slaying and slaughter of the stolen beesves, rapidly diminishing in size, and with it the squadrons' fervour and devotion to the throne of the great King.

Had the crowned robber not united to his other wonderful qualities those of a speculator in cattle, the ardour of his followers might have been kept up to a moderate height ; but to dispose of the herds confiscated in one province to purchasers in another, with the obvious intention of plundering them again for the market of another, and perhaps still a third, staggered even their dull and unreasoning intellects ; and vast multitudes deserted to the swelling ranks of the rebels. The Shoa tribute, which about that time came in, covered the strong, and fortified the confidence of the wavering and timid.

A quarrel with the bishop, and detention of the delegates from the south, again excited some misapprehension, but his Majesty's audacious confession that he had acted under the maddening influence of ardent spirits, was deemed an ample apology for the few misdeeds he had committed, not including the tortures inflicted upon the Frenshush (Europeans), in which he had indulged to no small extent.

The Shoa chiefs, after many procrastinations and ominous delays, received peremptory orders to depart for their respective governments, where, at the peril of their lives, they were to levy a fresh impost to supply the wants of their Negus (king). The haughty chiefs, without betraying their sentiments, humbly promised to obey the royal command ; but no sooner did they touch their native soil, than they threw off their allegiance, and, together with their people, joined Beseppa, till then an insignificant rebel chief, in proclaiming their independence. Tidings of this revolution reached the tyrant at Debra Tabor, and accelerated his departure for the South. Small-pox, famine, and desertion had made sad inroads into his army, and reduced its numbers to one-half of the amount that lately covered the wide-spreading plains around Gondar (the capital) ; and it was generally believed, though no one ventured to express his thoughts, that the campaign would prove a failure.

The rebellion in Shoa had a reflective influence on the turbulent Wollo-Gallas—those proud and martial highlanders—who, confident in their prowess, and the unfailing flight of their spears, were seldom, if ever, diverted from their intestine broils by a foreign assault. Hated by their bigoted neighbours, the Shoas, and very often sought in alliance by the pusillanimous Amharas, these Wollo-Gallas, ignorant and fanatical adherents of the prophet Mahomet as they were, enjoyed, on their lofty plains, and bleak mountains, the felicitous position of opposing an

impassable barrier to a conflict between the two Christian rulers of Ethiopia, King Theodorus and the King of Shoa. King Theodorus, however, undaunted by the bristling lances of the revilers of the Cross, like the impetuous mountain-torrents which irrigate their verdant plateaux, unexpectedly rushed upon them, scattering death, ruin, and desolation over scenes which for years had not been trodden by an Amharic warrior. Prompted by an innate yearning for pillage and bloodshed, and, in the present instance, with an implacable animosity, the rufianly hordes of the Negus unsparingly inflicted on young and old, the strong and the weak, the most brutal atrocities. The villages were plundered and burnt, the fields laid waste, and men, women, and children, either pitilessly butchered, or dragged into hopeless captivity or servile slavery. For although Abyssinian law forbids any to make slaves of a Christian community, it had no such feeling or restriction for Mahomedans. The havoc and carnage were appalling in the extreme; yet the great King, elated with his inglorious achievements, and accompanied by weeping and disconsolate multitudes of enslaved and helpless creatures, turned his back upon the blood-stained battle-field.

Weakened, but not exhausted; prostrated, but not destroyed; defeated, but not vanquished, the Gallas, after this convulsive shock, rose again out of the depths of their humiliation, and, headed by Achmeder Busheer, a chieftain famous for his valour, by stratagem and reckless daring, sought to retrieve the almost overwhelming misfortune of his people. The struggle lasted several years, and the contest would have continued, had not a double-bladed lance dispatched the leader, and compelled him to tend the wound which, to the universal grief of a grateful people, at last proved fatal to his life.

Waizero Worket, Queen of the Gallas (in the name of her son, Imam Ashmadee, a lad of about twelve years of age, who was the hereditary prince) now assumed the reins of government, and, to retain the fealty of the chiefs, prosecuted the popular war.

Unwilling, and perhaps unable, to contend against a foe whom he could not annihilate or subdue, the artful Theodorus, in conformity with his usual practice, had recourse to hollow flattery, and with visionary promises of wealth, renown, and glory, endeavoured to entice the young Prince into his plausible net. Restless, bold, and aspiring, the youthful Imam, who was dazzled by the fair speeches of the royal emissaries, and still more by the chivalrous exploits of the dreaded Sovereign who wooed his friendship and alliance, yielded to the reiterated solicitations, and in an evil hour joined, together with several of his great nobles, the standard of the faithless Amhara. The unhappy Regent-mother, and her panic-stricken subjects, to forestal a more grievous calamity, in their embarrassing position, submitted to the onerous coalition imposed by the villanous conqueror. Concessions extorted by low trickery, and enforced by bitter threats, could not perpetuate peace, or ward off hos-

tilities. The King's demands, as in the case of the European captives, grew in proportion to the entreaties of the Regent; and when it became impossible and ruinous to comply, the Prince and his veteran companions were bound in fetters, and thrown into prison.

The revolt in Shoa, and the defections in and out of the camp, ought to have taught the despot a salutary lesson; but no, propelled by the fury of his passion, he spurned opposition, and madly pursued a policy that has shaken the whole realm to its very foundation. Impatient to chastise the disaffected provinces of the South, he hurried on to Magdala (the prison we have so long inhabited in misery and chains), where he deposited his host of native chiefs (and ourselves, nine in number), and then, with his usual alacrity, precipitated himself upon the seditious Gallas.

His plan was feasible, and had he succeeded in subjugating those restless mountaineers, it would have disheartened the Shoas, and driven them to sue for an ignoble peace. The enemy suspected his design, and without hazarding a battle, withdrew himself to the distant and inaccessible mountains.

Foiled in his expectations, he thoughtlessly pushed across the plains he had more than once before traversed as victor, and in his mind, no doubt, already ruminated on the castigation he would inflict on his rebellious Shoa subjects. Once in the midst of the hostile land, the enemy plucked up courage, and descending from their lofty hiding-place, began a destructive guerilla war. Numerous bands, like birds of prey, hovered around the camp when it rested, or assailed its rear when it moved. The entire route along which the army marched was stained with blood, and tainted the air with the putrescent miasma of the mangled and mutilated corpses.

Worried, exhausted, and dispirited, the dastardly hordes, who in their exploits had been wont to triumph more by the exhibition of numbers than by genuine martial valour, did not much relish the hardships, privations, and perils of the campaign; and the multitudinous hordes of King Theodore, instead of exposing themselves to the trenchant blades of the Mahomedan Gallas, and the no less true weapon of his rebellious brother-Christian, deserted the royal standard, and went over to the enemy's lines. The expedition proved a disastrous failure, and the tyrant, chafed like a furious lion robbed of his prey, retreated to Magdala, where on shackled prisoners he vented his rankling rage. Thirty-six of the principal captives, besides the Galla prince and his companions, received, in addition to the fetters round their ankles, another (and that attached to a short chain) round the wrist, and the two being linked together, the poor men could only shuffle along on the ground, or crouch down in a doubled-up and stooping posture. The bragging descendant of Solomon, who delights to revel in the misery of his victims, on being informed that his commands had been executed,

jocosely observed, "They will now be more meek when they hear of my mishap!"

Disappointed in his hopes of conquering Shoa, he directed his efforts to win back the justly-forfeited amity of the Gallas. To obtain this object, he resorted to mean and low intimidation and insincere promises to work upon the affections of the Queen-Regent, the mother of Imam. The suffering Prince and his followers, sighing for liberty and the free air of their native plains, implored their relations and friends to acquiesce in the King's demands.

Unhappy men!—wrapped in the glowing visions of coming joy, they became woefully oblivious of the bondage that had saddened their past. Fair words and plausible arguments, supported by a mother's scolding tears, allayed the angry feelings of the contending parties, when an event took place which for ever blighted the prospects of a reconciliation.

Menilek, the son of Hailu Malakot (the successor of Sahela Sellassie), the late King of Shoa, and heir-apparent to the throne of that province, on the defeat of his father resigned himself into the hands of King Theodore, the conqueror. Quick, gentle, and unpretending, he propitiated the tyrant's favour, and was honoured with the hand of a royal princess, a daughter of the descendant of Solomon. The troubles in his native land, however, revived in his bosom the dormant desire to ascend the throne of his ancestors, and to restore that country to the pristine glory of his grandfather.

Possessed with this natural but ambitious feeling, he did not deliberate long on the course he ought to pursue. His friends, to whom he communicated the design, approved his intention, and during a dark and auspicious night he and his followers quitted the camp of his father-in-law, guided by the glimmer of an occasional star. They noiselessly threaded their way across the deep chasm which lies in the bosom of the valley between the Amba Magdala and the Galla country, and, pursuing their path to the south-east, by the dawn of day they arrived upon the plains of the Wollo-Gallas, too far off to fear pursuit.

The camp was generally astir at an early hour in the morning, and officers, soldiers, servants, and slaves, excited and bewildered at this extraordinary occurrence, were rushing about in all directions, instituting inquiries and soliciting information about the fugitives. The Princess, forsaken, and, if the report is true, maltreated by the spouse her rank had exalted, sat convulsed with shame and indignation in her disgraced tent, panting for the moment that would give satisfaction to her revenge, and quell the tempest of her soul in its torment at the ingrate.

At sunrise the gates of Magdala were unbarred, and Ras Engeda, the Governor of the Fort, followed by about a score of the gloomy chiefs, swept through the narrow entrance to announce to his Majesty the untoward event. The tyrant, although conscious that this desertion involved the irretrievable loss of a kingdom, dexterously concealed the



wound that bled beneath the white shama (loose, outward garment) in which he was enveloped. Being informed of the direction the runaways had taken, he calmly ordered his telescope, and gazed towards the spot where Menilek was exchanging courtesies and felicitations with his mortal foes. Immoveable and statue-like, he sat for some minutes absorbed in the terrible contemplation that tore his heart; and then turning to his expectant chiefs, he observed, with that cold brow in which he is a perfect adept, "Worket has found a son who is free; she can therefore dispense with the one who is chained."

These words, notwithstanding the bland accents in which they were uttered, needed no comment to those around him, who so well understood his character; and, almost instantaneously, everyone grasped the hilt of his sword, and stood ready to fulfil the executioner's task.

Imam and the other Gallas, twenty-five in number, were instantly dragged out of the prison compound, and, in the presence of the King and his nobles, hacked and chopped into pieces. Not satisfied, however, with the massacre of the Mahomedans, he intended also, it was said, to immolate the Christian prisoners; and, probably, he would have carried his design into effect, had he not dreaded the consternation, disgust, and horror such a deed might inspire.

The Gallas, tired of the vacillating policy of the Regent, immediately on the death of her son, threw off their allegiance, and appointed Mashead, another wife of their late ruler, Queen, during her son's minority. A war, à l'outrance, was now declared against the contaminated Amharas, and the remotest hint at peace was construed into a serious treasonable offence.

Matters about this time became imminently critical. The tyrant, it is true, had still an army of about thirty thousand men, and the central provinces were loyal; and had he not despised the signs which had forewarned him of coming events, and had he adopted a more mild and lenient rule, he might have checked the progress of the insurrection and consolidated his power. But, instead of prudence and moderation, he plunged headlong into fresh excesses, and alienated from him his best and most trusty friends.

The Metropolitan, who had ever espoused the cause of the people, was imprisoned in his amba (mountain) home, and Wagshum (Governor) Defareeh, Ras Oubie, and other great officers, were put in chains, because the despot distrusted their fealty,\* or was jealous of his influence among the soldiers.

Repeated attempts to penetrate into the Galla country, in order to relieve the garrison on Koubreet Amba (a fortress at the entrance of Shoa) having proved abortive, the worthy King, to the delight of all on

\* This appears to have been Theodore's policy throughout his reign, from the moment he obtained sufficient power to execute his villainous designs.



and around Amba Magdala, struck his tents, and removed his camp to the high table-land of Wadala, to the north-east of the River Beshilo.

On these cool and verdant plains, surrounded by the semi-Galla tribes, who at his bidding would leave the plough and hoe, and seize the lance and buckler, he might, by the exercise of a little adroitness and skill, have reinforced his army, and marched, unopposed by cowardly rebels, on Lasta and Tigré. But the decree, "Thou art weighed in the balances" had gone forth against him, and no human power could stop his downward career. "God in anger," he used to say, "has appointed me King of Abyssinia, and until my mission is discharged I shall continue invulnerable."

The Wadaleons did all in their power to satisfy their expensive guest. Bread, mead, and butter flowed profusely into the camp; and when these did not suffice, cows and sheep were led to the slaughter by his generous entertainers. The demand kept pace with the supply; but the poor people, finding at length that misery and starvation were staring them in the face, rose en masse, and defied the merciless depredator. Driven on by a burning sensation of resentment, and an uncontrollable itching for plunder, he fell upon the peaceably disposed peasantry, and committed the most monstrous barbarities. "To arms!" was now the watchword of the people; and with the rapidity of lightning the cry spread over the lofty hills and plains of Wadala, was caught up by the deep valleys of Tschetshaho, till every village and hamlet within a radius of about thirty miles re-echoed to the tumultuous shout.

The film fell from the despot's eyes, and he now began to see the precarious tenure of his power, which was strikingly convincing to his astonished gaze. A more humane proceeding might still, notwithstanding numerous obstacles, have postponed the impending crisis. But this idea shook his whole frame. "By the sword I obtained a throne, and by the sword I will maintain it, or perish in the attempt." Such sentiments were not calculated to impose a restraint on a temper that knew no persuasion but the lash of the hippopotamus-whip, and no concession but the mutilating knife. Wadala experienced in all its rigours this frantic maxim; the desolation was complete, and the revenge most signal. The fire of insurrection, though extinguished in one spot, had already wafted its sparks, and kindled the conflagration, not so easily subdued, in many others. For miles and miles the dreadful tidings had circulated, and wherever there still existed a lingering feeling of loyalty, it was shaken off or transferred to the Wagshum Góbazie, the rebel ruler of Tigré and Lasta.\*

\* This man is the blood-enemy of King Theodore, and thinks he has a better and more legitimate right to the crown of Abyssinia. It was he who offered Colonel Merewether to bring down the captives to Massowah, if England would recognize his title, and assist him to obtain the throne. The Government refused this offer, on the ground of its not being honourable to treat with him while the period for the ultimatum to Theodore was not expired.

For a few weeks the grain and cattle collected by the rapacious hordes of the King sufficed to glut their rapacious stomachs, and then it became imperative upon them to seek out fresh places for pillage. Begemeder, owing to its well-stored granaries and numerous flocks, offered an abundant harvest for the support of the pillage-loving army; but as many of the chiefs and soldiers among the royal troops belonged to that province, it was deemed inexpedient to provoke aggression there. The casting of cannon at Gaffat, the settling accounts with governors, and the execution of re-captured deserters, afforded a good pretext for a protracted stay from home. A low, but distinct murmur of dissatisfaction among the oppressed peasantry, which found a response in the hearts of their friends and relatives in the ranks, induced the unsparing desolator to shift his camp.

Unhappy Dembea, which by this time had recovered from the shock of former years, to avoid a similar catastrophe now, hospitably entertained the greedy legions on their journey round the lake. The tyrant himself, in his progress, was agitated by unwonted compunctions in beholding the desolation he had created in that once lovely and prolific region. Lifting his right hand to heaven, he swore that "if God gave him back his country, he would make those weed-entangled tracts a terrestrial paradise." It was one of his retinue who overheard the remark, and he whispered to his companions, "If he creates a paradise, the serpent will certainly not be wanting." These penitential emotions were, however, only a spasmodic qualm, which quickly passed away, without enlightening the soul's midnight gloom.

It was about this time that Mr. Rassam arrived at Matemma, on the errand of mercy from the Queen of England. Flattered by an envoy from one of the greatest sovereigns of the universe, the crafty Theodore accorded Mr. Rassam a most gracious and brilliant reception. Every wish was to be gratified, and every request embodied in her Majesty's letter was to be granted. The captives were ordered to be released, and the members of the Mission were to be treated with royal deference; not even the most trivial favour that could minister to their gratification was to be denied to the honoured guests. This amazing condescension augured well for the solution of the Abyssinian difficulty, and the termination of the cruel and wretched bondage of the captives.

Damot, on the borders of Godjam, whether in token of gratitude for the advent of the distinguished visitors, or for some other equally worthy pretext, is still unknown, was plundered, and more than 80,000 head of cattle driven away to furnish the broundo (raw meat) for the royal table, and to replenish, by advantageous speculations, the drained dollar-bags in the Negus' exchequer.

Mr. Rassam, delighted with the success of his difficult mission, and captivated by the King's generous and amiable deportment, sojourned a few days in the camp, and then, escorted by royal baldarabas (intro-

ducers, commissioners), steered across the Lake Tsana to the opposite shore, (where provision was made for the reception of himself and suite, consisting of Lieutenant Prideaux and Dr. Blanc) to a town called Quarata, or Korata; and the army moved on to Zagye.

At Korata, the captives, after their journey from Magdala, joined the suite of Mr. Rassam. Compliments the most exaggerated were now more than ever liberally exchanged between the King and the envoy of her Majesty. There also took place a reconciliation between the offended Negus and his white captives, and all went on as cheerily as a marriage-bell.

The long days, not long in hours, but on account of the uncertainty still hanging over the future, rolled on most sluggishly.

Solomon's seal, and other trinkets, which were to be awarded to the members of the Mission, appeared never to progress, and it was vainly conjectured that the workmanship was so elaborate that they would not obtain the finishing touch until the Greek kalends. Hours glided into days, days into weeks, and at last the welcome intelligence reached the Mission camp that the saddles and swords had arrived from Debra Tabor, but that the unfortunate seals in the workshop of Zandel, one of the King's European employés, were still in embryo condition. The inspired writer of the matchless Book of Proverbs was forgotten, and the wise King of Israel rose before the mind of vision like a terrible, unsightly spectre. Whether Zandel's fingers were palsied, or whether a mysterious warning checked the progress of the seals, is still a secret; nor did anyone harass his brain with such a forbidden topic, particularly as the decorations were not to protract the stay on Habesh ground.

The departure of the captives, their short journey, and treacherous arrest, need not be reiterated here.

The despicable tyrant was true to his nature, and it is only to be deplored that an over-weening confidence should have forestalled what might, perhaps, have been practicable—a timely flight.

The camp, which is never a very agreeable home, after the keen disappointment all had experienced, became a perfectly loathsome abode. Those fond of sensation scenes could here have cloyed their strange taste. There at one time might be seen the cracking giraffe (hippotamus-whip, six feet long) as it descended on the bare back, cutting deep furrows with every stroke.\* Next, the knotty stick rattled noisily above

\* Dr. Blanc gives the following account of this horrible weapon of torture:—"When we arrived he (the King) imposed upon us by his sweet tongue; we saw the wild beast only at rest in his drowsy state; we thought him good, the rebels bad, and that virtue and goodness would at last prevail over rebellion and mutiny. But the mask soon fell; even at Zagye (the camp) we saw the six-feet-long hippopotamus-whip tearing to pieces the delicate skin of an Abyssinian lady, but this was nothing. Gondar (the capital) disappeared in flames, kindled by the "father of his people," so that the rebels on the surrounding height might see, far and distant, the glare of the doomed city; priests, women, and not a few wretches supposed to be rebels, were added as fuel, so that the fire should not go out for want of materials. Chiefs after chiefs were chained, tormented, and crowded together in small huts; day after day new murders,

the bluster of heaving bands; and then again there were executions of every device and cunning, from the severing of the head to the amputating of hands and feet, and from the battering with stones to the braining of an appellant for justice, with a block of wood, by the delicate hands of a King. But it is sickening to linger on the diversions of the Negus, with which every one in the position of a captive becomes, alas! too familiar, and I gladly, therefore, resume the thread of my narrative, from which a cruel episode caused us, *en passant*, to digress.

Encamped on the confines of a country that had first raised the standard of rebellion and challenged the despot's power, it was naturally anticipated that an order to march against the insurgents would every moment resound through the long lines of black tents by which the King was surrounded. The enemy, undaunted by the herald's vaunting proclamation, that ere long a rich booty would fall to each soldier's share, hovered in small divisions around the outlets of Zagye (where they were encamped), killing stragglers, and enticing deserters. Ashamed and irritated, the blustering despot indulged in all sorts of innoxious brag. "Godjam," he prates—and that, too, in the presence of his foreign guests—"Godjam I shall destroy, and its inhabitants I shall kill." Such were the outpourings of his heart; but happily the promptings of his dastardly spirit were not accomplished. His feelings were most merciless; and had his arm been equal to the task, the lion, the leopard, and the elephant might now occupy the homes where busy multitudes of human beings pursued their peaceful and varied occupations, and industrious toil, in quiet security. Godjam was therefore spared, but Zagye had to suffer.

This hadam (asylum), embosomed in one of the woody slopes that skirt Maitsha plain, where the blue Nile, after a graceful sweep through the Lake Dembea, or Tsana, sends its muddy, but prolific waters over the dizzying cataracts, and across the fat pastures and dreary sands, down through the regions of immortal fame, owing to its superstitiously-sacred character, enjoyed a kind of immunity from the forays and exactions which so often blight the prospects of the merchant, and the labours of the husbandman, in this misgoverned and distressed country.

But King Theodorus acknowledged no such privileges, nor admitted any rules which did not coincide with his despotic will. The Church might, indeed, be sacred, but it must be stripped of its wealth, the homes of the peasantry might present charming retreats for the people,

new tortures, until one morning he enjoyed the sight (and, it is said by another captive, actually assisted) of 670 of his own soldiers butchered on a mere suspicion of their intention of desiring to run away." Another account states that after the desertion of 3,000 of his soldiers, their wives and children, who were left in the camp, were clothed in cotton dresses dipped in wax, and actually set on fire, and burnt to death. It is also stated that when he set fire to Gondar, and burnt down the forty-four churches there, that scores of women were driven into houses, which were set on fire, and all burnt together. These atrocities are only exceeded by the account given by Mr. Rassam, in his letter to the *Times*, in which it is said the King butchered 2,500 of his soldiers, who were suspected of intended desertion.

and sylvan beauty for the peaceful and industrious inhabitants; but they must be rifled and burnt for the benefit or caprice of the pillage-loving hordes who accompanied their royal master in his rapacious and murderous expeditions.

His was not a mission to teach his subjects to live in the midst of charming bowers; no, they must learn to despise the coffee and lemon-tree, the jasmine and myrtle, and to be content with stinging weeds and pestilential wilds. He was, as he is in all that involves ruin and misery, true to his character,—a despot and a despoiler. And Zagye will long remember the visit of King Theodore to its locality.

Whilst the despot, like a destroying angel, was scattering death and desolation along his path, another and no less dangerous and unsparing foe made its appearance.

For some days there had been rumours that the cholera was in the camp, but superstitious fear foolishly sought to suppress the ugly fact. A sudden death in the royal household, and the unmistakeable symptoms that others would speedily follow, awed the tyrant, and induced him to hurry on to Quarata (where the captives had taken up their residence). The insidious enemy obstinately followed the weary hordes, marking the whole way with the corpses of its victims. Agha Faree Gholam (the executioner), a great friend of the King (whose heavy hand had inflicted more than one wound on the face of the writer on a former occasion, whilst squatted in an easy attitude near him), was suddenly struck by the invisible shaft, and for ever deprived of the abused power of the hangman. The cemeteries round the nunnery and churches in and near Quarata (or Korata) were already choked with the dead. Still the terrible scourge did not abate its virulence. Everywhere—in the streets, in the tents, on the fields,—in fact, in all the surrounding places, there was heard the plaintive wails of the mourners, and the thrilling shrieks of the bereaved and the dying. Few were exempted; hoary age and innocent childhood, the burly warrior and the tender maiden, all were—unmourned, and, I fear, too frequently unforgotten—consigned to the silent but grasping tomb. The tyrant, thinking that the clods might soon rattle upon his own coffin, now read the Psalms (the constant companion of his campaigns or his camp), prayed, and appeared penitent; but if not in reality so, he was at least more humane. No longer, then, fell on the startled ear the crack of the “giraffe,” or the vociferous shouts for the agha farees (hangmen). The executioner’s post was in reality now what no rational being here could ever have dreamt of—an absolute sinecure in King Theodore’s camp—whilst the office of the priest became a most arduous and self-denying task. “On to Debra Tabor (the present residence of royalty, and the only spot King Theodore can now call his own), where the air is salubrious and the hills breathe the vigour of health!” shouted the royal herald. And instantly the tents were struck, the horses and mules were saddled, and



every one able to move hastened forward to ward off the dreaded disease; but the rider on the "pale horse" was as indefatigable on the march as he was during the halt of the multitudes, who had cherished the vain hope that they were secure from his icy grasp; and hundreds expired under the shade of the trees, on the banks of meandering streams, and on broad fallow fields. The very spots where relatives watched around the convulsed frame of a husband, a wife, brother, or sister, were impregnated with offensive and putrid exhalations. Those who had no friends, or heart of sympathy to alleviate and lighten their pangs, or to administer to their malady, tottered painfully along till their eyes became dim, their limbs stiff, and they sunk down to rise no more. No sepulchral rites were awarded to their mortal remains, no funeral hymns were sung around their sleeping dust; a few handfuls of earth were thrown over their corpses, and then the indifferent multitude rushed from the exposed village cemetery, or the isolated dell, careless and unconcerned whether before another sun rose the vultures of the air or the hyænas of the forest had gorged their voracious appetites upon the lately breathing and thinking forms of their accompanying relatives and friends. Thus perished hundreds and thousands of the hosts of that army whose King had led and encouraged them to deeds of violence and rapine—shall we say, as a just retribution for their offences?

At Debra Tabor the pestilence received a check, although numbers still succumbed to its pernicious influence.

The epidemic had been most virulent in the army, and how to reinforce its broken and scattered ranks began to be a grave and momentous question. Quara, to the west (the province where Theodore was born), and Tschelga, to the north-west, had hitherto been privileged provinces; the former on account of its being the natal home of the despot, and the latter because it contained until then the State prison; they had now, however, to furnish large contingents. The raw recruits, fond of their sunny vales, where benignant nature, with the least toil, amply provides every want, did not, therefore, relish the bustle and excitement, and still less the privations, of a camp. And so, without troubling their dull intellects about the King, the condition of his country, and the ephemeral honours and rewards that it was promised them should fall to their lot, they girded their unwieldy swords upon their belts, and during a bright moonlight night bade adieu to the chilly upland plains, where they had been called to join the army, and returned to their picturesque and fertile homes.

The tyrant, instead of wreaking his disappointment on his foes, ruthlessly resented this affront upon his friends. Rebels, with their factious bands, defied him on all sides; and he had only to buckle on his faithful sword, and all their contemptible show would have terminated in a precipitous flight. For it is well known that his prestige was such,



and the superstitious feelings of the people had so completely cowed them either into servile obedience or dastardly cowardice, that the very sound of his voice made the whole army tremble.

Besotted by an insane belief that his throne was secure, he wasted his days in fanciful speculations on his future contests, slaughters, and victories. "Let the insurgents get fat during the rainy season; we shall kill them afterwards," was his favourite expression. Impoverished and grievously taxed, Begemeder had during the whole of this time to bear the burden of providing for the King and his army. Military chiefs, governors, and even common soldiers, despairingly shook their greasy, bushy heads. The insurrection in the disaffected provinces assumed a wider range. The dangers far and near grew more and more pressing; and the prelude of impending ruin resounded from voices hitherto duly vocal to the tyrant's praise. Roused to action by these ominous signs, he bade farewell to debasing indulgences, and set out for the South.

It was now thought that the campaign had begun in earnest, and that a struggle, in which the fate of the realm was involved, would ensue in reality, when lo! and behold, the straggling forces were ordered back to Debra Tabor, and the farce terminated by sending eight white defenceless captives to Magdala! Enemies were secure, and friends in peril. Gondar, which more than once had felt the sanguinary violence of the despot, was again to smart beneath his pitiless ferocity. A rebel, whom the few impoverished and half-starved inhabitants were forced to accommodate in their huts, formed the pretext of this outburst. A sharp march of two days brought the spoliator to that ruined and ill-used capital. The people, terrified and panic-struck, in their confusion raised the wonted "li-la-la-li" of welcome. This the cruel tyrant monster construed into a warning note to the insurgents, and instantly every man, woman, and child found in the streets was seized and consumed beneath the burning rafters of the nearest houses. The private dwellings, which had been robbed on several previous occasions, offered no booty to the invaders; but the forty-four churches, which both Christian and Mahomedan marauders had left hitherto untouched, presented attractions not to be despised by the pious, psalm-reading, and pillage-loving King Theodorus. The command was given, and simultaneously the profane scoundrels rushed into the sacred edifices (which had hitherto been deemed places of refuge, both for the people and their property), and unheeding of the supplications and tears of the people, or the deprecations of the clergy, maltreated the monks and priests, carried off vestments, mitres, crosses, pictures, and chalices—in fact, everything which, on account of its antiquity or value, had for ages been regarded with the utmost awe and veneration by the devout and superstitious hierarchy. Many of the sacred edifices were wantonly set on fire and burnt to the ground, and those that escaped that element were sacrilegiously despoiled by the miscreant soldiery. The news of this

infamous spoliation spread rapidly through the length and breadth of the land. "Death to the odious infidels!" shouted every voice but those of the myrmidons of the tyrant. But although the stir, clamour, and tumult was intense, it all ended in empty demonstration and noise. The tyrant, after this inglorious achievement, returned with his shameless trophies to Debra Tabor, where the gibes and sneers of foes, and the contempt and disgust of friends, stung him to the quick, and raised a tempest in his heart that could only find relief in the wail of misery or the moans of distress. His military chiefs, the abettors of his crimes, in the absence of other victims, were selected to feel the pangs and agonies they had often enough mercilessly inflicted on the helpless and unoffending.

A charge of conspiracy and sedition was trumped up against them, and without trial or inquiry they were stripped, chained, and thrust into prison. An exorbitant fine was immediately imposed upon them, and when this was not forthcoming, they were subjected to the most excruciating tortures.

The perfidy of the savage tyrant against his chiefs was an unmistakeable warning to their people; confident in the strength of their spears, and in the inviolable loyalty they had in every emergency exhibited, the intimidation of their King was recklessly unheeded, and their usual avocations were pursued with unslacked industry. The panting and plundering Theodorus did not admire this tranquillity, as it deprived him of the plea of attacking the peaceably disposed peasantry. Want, however, distress, and famine, broke down the weak barriers, and, to the surprise of every one, the villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood of Debra Tabor were pillaged and razed, or burnt. The patient and docile people who had submitted to starvation to feed the robber and his bands, now shook off their dull sloth, and, roused by their necessitous condition, snatched up their weapons, which they had hitherto concealed, and rose up manfully to assert their rights and defend their lives and homes. The beacon of insurrection was lighted on the hills surrounding the King's camp, and met with a ready response from every promontory, nook, and corner of the weary and exhausted province. Frantic with demoniacal rage at this unexpected resistance of his power and authority, the infatuated barbarian sprang upon the weakest of the seven districts into which the province was divided, and perpetrated enormities not to be thought of without a shudder; the weak and the strong, the aged and the young, all fell beneath the murderous knife, or perished in the flames of their burning huts. Prayers and supplications, groans and shrieks, fell unheeded alike on deaf ears; and the curved blade, did not return to its scabbard until, from the Tzana or Dembea Lake up to the capital of Begemeder (Debra Tabor), all that could shelter man or beast was reduced to ashes.

The retributive vengeance and the bristling array of lances that stood

prepared to dispute the progress of the tyrant to the South had cowed the spirit of the King, and induced him again to return to his entrenched camp, with his gangs of banditti, and thousands of famished peasants, who to escape a dreadful death had joined the rabble host, preferring the security of a strong, and for Abyssinian assailants, an impregnable fence. Now and then, it is true, he sallies forth upon a marauding expedition to retired villages, where his devastating arm has not yet been felt, carrying death and destruction to the peaceful and unprotected peasants, and returning with spoils and triumph to his camp. But he dares not wander far from his stronghold, lest he should meet with a foe who might chastise him, or cut him off from his fenced city.

The political condition of the country is at present a complete anomaly—a king without a country, subjects, or army, and rebels with countless legions and the support of the nation, stand opposed to each other in hostile array, none of whom have courage enough to attack the tyrant in his den, even if they dare to meet him in the field. Thus anarchy and confusion reign everywhere, and ruin and desolation threaten the whole realm with destruction, and famine. Had patriotism and regard for order and law not been superseded by the lust of power and the gratification of stupid pride, Theodore's ferocious violence would never have dared to riot in the throes of the people. Just now the clamour for the destruction of the common enemy is no longer confined to the lines of the insurgent chiefs. It is the utterance of the Church, and may be heard in the peasant's hut. Whether the Wagshum Góbazyé,\* the most puissant of the rebel leaders, after the rainy season, will lead his forces into Begemeder, and assail the rampant lion in his den, a few weeks more must decide. He has pledged his word to the impatient peasantry, and if he disappoints their eager expectations, he will forfeit their allegiance, and mar his own ambitious prospects. Whether the events looming in the distance will bring peace or more trouble, security or greater confusion; whether they will unrivet the manacles of the captives, or fasten them tighter round their limbs, are contingencies under the control of Him who, when foes surround and fears agitate, can succour, shield, and deliver.

HENRY A. STERN.

\* If the Negus falls into his hands, he will have a woeful death, as numbers of the Wagshum's relatives have been the victims of the ruthless tyrant's cruelty. About eight years ago the Negus cruelly mutilated the Wagshum's father, and then publicly hung his remains on a tree.

## LOSING LENA.

I SAID I'd tell you some more about Tod.

One day in the summer holidays, just after the crop of hay was got in, and the bare fields looked as white in the blazing sun as if they had been scorched, Tod and I were in the three-cornered meadow next the fold-yard. He was making a bat-net with gauze and two sticks. Young Jacobson had shown us his the previous day, and a bat he caught with it; and Tod thought he would catch bats too. But he did not seem to be making much hand at the nets, and somehow managed to send the pointed end of the stick through a corner of it.

"I don't think that gauze is strong enough, Tod."

"I'm afraid it isn't, Johnny. Here, catch hold of it. I'll go in-doors, and see if they can't find me some better."

He flew off past the ricks, and leaped the little gate into the fold-yard—a tall, strong fellow, fit to leap the Avon. There ensued some talking in a few minutes, and I went to meet him. Tod was coming away from the house with Lena.

"Have you got the gauze, Tod?"

"Not a bit of it; that old cat won't look for any; says she hasn't time," was Tod's answer. "I'll hinder her time a little. Come along, Lena."

Tod alluded to Hannah. I told you before that they were often at daggers drawn. Hannah had a chronic complaint, ill-temper, and Tod called her names to her face. When he went in just now, he found her dressing Hugh and Lena to go out, and she just turned him out of the nursery, and told him not to bother her then with his gauze and his wants. Lena ran after Tod; she liked him better than all of us put together. She had got on her blue silk, and a white straw hat with daisies round it, and open-work stockings on her pretty little legs; by which we saw she was about to be taken out for show.

"What are you going to do with her, Tod?"

"I'm going to hide her," answered Tod, in his decisive voice. "Keep where you are, Johnny."

Lena enjoyed the rebellion. In a minute or two Tod came back alone. He had left her between the ricks in the three-cornered field, and told her not to come out. Then he went off to the front of the house, and I stood inside the barn talking to Mack, who was hammering away at the iron of the cart-wheel. Out came Hannah by-and-by. She had been dressing herself as well as Hugh.

"Miss Lena!"

No answer. Hannah called again, and then came up the fold-yard, looking about.

"Master Johnny, have you seen the child?"

"What child?" I was not going to spoil Tod's sport by telling her.

"Miss Lena. She has got off somewhere, and my mistress is waiting for her in the basket-chaise."

"I see her just now along of Master Joseph," spoke up Mack, arresting his noisy hammering.

"See her where?" asked Hannah.

"Close here, a-going that way."

He pointed with the hammer to the palings and gate that divided the yard from the three-cornered field. Hannah ran there and stood looking over. The ricks were within a short stone's-throw, but Lena kept close. Hannah called out again, and ranged her eyes over the empty field.

"The child's not there. Where can she have got to, tiresome little thing?"

In the house, and about the house, and out of the house, as the old song says, went Hannah. It was jolly to see her, and laugh on the quiet, as Tod did. Mrs. Todhetley, Hugh with her, was seated patiently in the basket-chaise before the hall-door, wondering what made Hannah so long. Tod, playing with the mild she-donkey's ears, stood talking, unusually gracious, to his step-mother. I went round. The Pater had gone riding to Evesham; Dwarf Giles, who made the nattiest little groom in the county, for all his five-and-thirty years, behind him.

"I can't find Miss Lena," cried Hannah, coming out.

"Not find Miss Lena!" echoed Mrs. Todhetley. "What do you mean, Hannah? Have you not dressed her?"

"I dressed her first, ma'am, before Master Hugh, and she went out of the nursery. I can't think where she can have got to. I've searched everywhere."

"But, Hannah, we must have her directly; I am late as it is."

They were going over to the court where the Stirlings lived, to a children's early party. Mrs. Todhetley got out of the basket-chaise, to help in the search.

"I had better fetch her, Tod," I whispered.

He nodded yes. Tod never bore malice, and I suppose he thought Hannah had had enough of a hunt for that day. I ran through the fold-yard to the ricks, and called to Lena.

"You can come out now, little stupid."

But no Lena answered. There were seven ricks in a group, and I went into all the openings between them. Lena was not there. It was rather odd, and I looked across the field and towards the lane and the coppice, shouting out sturdily.

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"Mack, have you seen Miss Lena pass in-doors?" I stayed to ask him, in going back.

No: Mack had not noticed her; and I went round to the front again, and whispered to Tod.

"What a muff you are, Johnny! She's between the ricks fast enough. No danger that she'd come out when I told her to stay!"

"But she's not there indeed, Tod. You go and look else."

Tod vaulted off, his long legs seeming to take flying leaps, like a deer's, on his way to the ricks.

To make short of the story, Lena was gone. Lost! The house, the out-door buildings, the gardens were searched for her, and she was not to be found. Mrs. Todhetley's fears flew to the ponds at first; but it was impossible she could have come to grief in either of the two, as they were both in view of the barn-door where I and Mack had been. Tod avowed where he had put her to hide; and it was not to be imagined where she had gone. The most feasible conjecture was, that she had run from between the ricks when Hannah called to her, and was hiding in the lane.

Tod was in a fever, and loudly threatened her with unheard-of whippings, to cover his real concern. Hannah looked red, Mrs. Todhetley rather whiter than usual. I was standing by him when the cook came up; a sharp woman, with red-brown eyes. We called her Molly.

"Mr. Joseph," said she, "I've heard of gipsies stealing children!"

"Well?" returned Tod.

"There was one at the door a while ago—an insolent one, too. Perhaps Miss Lena——"

"Which way did she go?—which door was she at?" burst forth Tod.

"'Twas a man, sir. He come up to the kitchen-door, and steps inside as bold as brass, asking me to buy some wooden skewers he'd cut, and saying something about a sick child. When I told him to march, that we never tolerated tramps here, he wanted to answer me, and I just shut the door in his face. A regular gipsy, if ever I see one," continued Molly; "his skin tawny and his wild hair jet-black. Maybe, in revenge, he have stole off the little miss."

Tod took up the notion, and his face turned white. "Don't say anything of this to Mrs. Todhetley," he said to Molly. "We must just scour the country."

But in departing from the kitchen-door, the gipsy man could not by any possibility have got to the rick-field without going through the house and the fold-yard. It was true that Lena might have run round and got in the gipsy's way. Unfortunately, none of the men were about, except Mack and old Thomas. Tod sent these off in different directions; Mrs. Todhetley drove away in her pony-chaise to the lanes round about, saying the child might have strayed there; Molly and the

maids started elsewhere; and I and Tod went flying along a bye-road that branched off in a line, as it were, from the kitchen-door. Nobody could keep up with Tod, he went so fast; and I was not tall and strong as he was. But I saw what Tod in his haste did not see—a dark man, with a bundle of skewers and a stout stick, walking on the other side of the hedge. I whistled Tod back again.

"What is it, Johnny?" he said, panting. "Have you seen her?"

"Not her. But look there. That must be the man Molly spoke of."

Tod crashed through the hedge as if it had been so many cobwebs, and accosted the gipsy. I followed more carefully, but got my face scratched.

"Were you up at the great house begging a short while ago?" demanded Tod, in an awful passion.

The man turned round on Tod with a face of brass. I say brass, because he did it so independently; but it was not an insolent face in itself, rather a sad one, and very sickly.

"What's that you ask me, master?"

"I ask whether it was you who were at the manor-house just now, begging?" fiercely repeated Tod.

"I was at a big house offering wares for sale, if you mean that. I wasn't begging."

"Call it what you please," said Tod, growing white again. "What have you done with the little girl?"

For, you see, Tod had fully caught the impression that the gipsy spoken of by Molly *had* stolen Lena, and he spoke in accordance with it.

"I've seen no little girl, master."

"You have," and Tod gave his foot a stamp. "What have you done with her?"

The man's only answer was to turn round and walk off, muttering to himself. Tod pursued him, calling him a thief and other names; but nothing more satisfactory could he get.

"He can't have taken her, Tod. If he had, she'd be with him now. He couldn't eat her, you know."

"He may have given her to a confederate."

"What to do? What do gipsies steal children for?"

Tod stopped in a passion, lifting his hand. "If you torment me with these frivolous questions, Johnny, I'll strike you. How do I know what's done with stolen children? Sold again, perhaps. I'd give a hundred pounds out of my pocket at this minute if I knew where those gipsies were encamped."

We suddenly lost the fellow. Tod had been keeping him in sight in the distance. Whether he disappeared up a gum-tree, or into a rabbit-hole, Tod couldn't tell; but gone he was.

Up this lane, down that; over that moor, across this common; so

raced Tod and I. And the afternoon wore away, and we had changed our direction a dozen times: which possibly was not wise.

The sun was getting low as we passed Ragley gates, for we had finally got into the Alcester road. Tod was going to do what we ought to have done at first: report the loss at Alcester. Somebody came riding along on a stumpy pony. It proved to be Gruff Blossom, groom to the Jacobsons. They called him "Gruff" because of his temper. He did touch his hat to us, which was as much as you could say, and spurred the stumpy animal on. But Tod went up to him, and he was obliged to stop and listen.

"The gipsies stole off little Miss Lena!" cried old Blossom, coming out of his gruffness. "That's a rum go! Ten to one if you find her for a year to come."

"But, Blossom, what do they do with the children they steal?" I asked, in a sort of agony.

"They cuts their hair off and dyes their skins brown and then takes 'em out to fairs a ballad-singing," answered Blossom.

"But why need they do it, when they have children of their own?"

"Ah, well, that's a question I couldn't answer," said old Blossom.

"Maybe their'n arn't pretty childern—Miss Lena, she is."

"Have you heard of any gipsies being encamped about here?" Tod demanded of him.

"Not lately, Mr. Joseph. Five or six months ago, there was a lot 'camped on a piece o' ground o' the Markis's. They warn't there long."

"Can't you ride about, Blossom, and see after the child?" asked Tod, putting something into his hand.

Old Blossom pocketed it, and went off with a nod. He was riding about, as we knew afterwards, for hours. Tod made straight for the police-station at Alcester, and told his tale. Not a soul was there but Jenkins, one of the men.

"I haven't seen no suspicious characters about," said Jenkins, who seemed to be eating something. He was a big man, with short black hair combed on his forehead, and he had a habit of turning his face upwards, as if looking after his nose—a square ornament, that stood up straight.

"She is between four and five years old; a very pretty child, with blue eyes, and a good deal of curling auburn hair," said Tod, who was getting feverish.

Jenkins wrote it down—"Name, Todhetley. What Christian name?"

"Adalena, called 'Lena.'"

"Recollect the dress, sir?"

"Pale blue silk, straw hat with wreath of daisies round it; open-worked white stockings, and thin black shoes; white drawers, finished

off with tatting stuff," recounted Tod, as if he had prepared the list by heart coming along.

"That's bad, that dress is," said Jenkins, putting down the pen.

"Why is it bad?"

"'Cause the things is tempting. Quite half the children that get stole is stole for what they've got upon their backs. Tramps and that sort will run a risk for a blue silk, specially if it's clean and glistening, that they'd not run for a brown holland pinafore. Auburn curls, too," added Jenkins, shaking his head; "that's a temptation also. I've knowed children sent back home with bare heads afore now. Any ornaments, sir?"

"She was safe to have on her little gold neck-chain and cross. They are very small, Jenkins—not worth much."

Jenkins lifted his nose—not in disdain, it was a habit he had. "Not worth much to you, sir, who could buy such any day, but an uncommon bait to professional child-stealers. Were the cross a coral, or any stone of that sort?"

"It was a thin, small gold cross, and the chain was thin. They could only be seen when her cloak was taken off. Oh, I forgot the cloak; it was white: llama, I think they call it. She was going to a child's party."

Some more questions and answers, most of which Jenkins took down. Handbills were to be printed and posted, and a reward offered on the morrow, if she was not found previously. Then we came away; there was nothing more to do at the station.

"Wouldn't it have been better if Jenkins had gone out seeking her and telling of the loss abroad, instead of waiting to write all that down?" I asked.

"Johnny, if we don't find her to-night, I shall go mad," was all Tod answered.

He went back down Alcester Street at a rushing walk—not a run. "Where are you going now?" I said.

"I'm going up hill and down dale till I find that gipsies' encampment. You can go on home, Johnny, if you are tired."

I had not felt tired till we were in the police-station. Excitement keeps fatigue off. But I was not going to give in, and said I should keep with him.

"All right, Johnny."

Before we were clear of Alcester, Budd the agent came up. He was turning out of the public-house at the corner. It was dusk then. Tod laid hold of him.

"Budd, you are about always, in all kinds of by-nooks and lanes: can you tell me of any encampment of gipsies between here and the manor-house?"

The agent's business took him abroad a great deal, you know, into the rural districts around.

"Gipsies' encampment?" repeated Budd, giving both of us a stare. "There's none that I know of. In the spring, a lot of them had the impudence to squat down on the Marquis's——"

"Oh, I know all that," interrupted Tod. "Is there nothing of the sort about now?"

"I see a miserable little tent to-day up Cookhill way," said Budd. "It might have been a gipsy's or a travelling tinker's. 'Twasn't of much account, whichever it were."

Tod gave a sort of spring. "Whereabouts?" was all he asked. And Budd explained where. Tod went off like a shot, and I after him.

If you are familiar with Alcester, or have visited at Ragley or anything of that, you must know the long green lane leading to Cookhill; it's dark with overhanging trees, and up-hill all the way. We took that road—Tod first, and I last; and we came to the top, and turned in the direction Budd had described the tent to be.

It was not to be called dark; the nights never are at midsummer; and rays from the bright light in the west glimmered through the trees. On the outskirts of the coppice, in a bit of low ground, we saw the tent, a little mite of a thing, looking no better than a funnel turned upside down. Sounds were heard within it, and Tod put his finger on his lip while he listened. But we were too far off, and he took his boots off, and crept up close.

Sounds of wailing—of somebody in pain. But that Tod had been three parts out of his senses all the afternoon, he might have known at once that they did not come from Lena, or any one so young. Words were mingled with them in a woman's voice; uncouth in its accents, nearly non-understandable in its language, an awful sadness in its tone.

"A bit longer! a bit longer, Corry, and he'd ha' been back. You needn't ha' grudged it to us. Oh, ——h! if ye had but waited a bit longer!"

I don't write exactly as she spoke; I shouldn't know how to spell it: we made a dash guess at half the words. Tod, who had grown white again, drew on his boots, and lifted up the opening of the tent.

I had never seen any scene like that; I don't suppose I shall see another. About a foot from the ground was a raised surface of some sort, thickly covered with dark-green rushes, just the size and shape of a gravestone. A little child, about as old as Lena, lay on it, a white cloth thrown across her, just touching the white, still face. A torch, blazing and smoking away, was thrust into the ground and lighted up the scene. Whiter the face looked now, because it had been tawny in life. I'd rather see one of our faces dead than a gipsy's. The contrast between the white face and dress of the child and the green bed of rushes it lay on was something remarkable. A young woman, dark too, and handsome enough to create a commotion at the fair, knelt down, her brown



hands uplifted; a gaudy ring on one of the fingers, worth sixpence perhaps, new, sparkling in the torch-light. Tod strode up to the dead face and looked at it for full two minutes. I do believe he thought at first that it was Lena.

"What is this?" he asked.

"It's my dead child!" the woman answered. "She did not wait that her father might see her die!"

But Tod had got his head full of Lena, and looked round. "Is there no other child here?"

As if to answer him, a bundle of rags came out of a corner and set up a howl. It was a boy, and our going in had woke him up. The woman sat down on the ground and looked at us.

"We have lost a child—a little girl," explained Tod. "I thought she might have been brought here—or have strayed here."

"I've lost *my* girl," said the woman. "Death has come for her!" And, in speaking to us, she spoke a more intelligible language than when alone.

"Yes; but this child has been lost—lost out of doors! Have you seen or heard anything of one?"

"I've not been in the way o' seeing or hearing, master; I've been in the tent alone. If folks had come to my aid, Corry might not have died. I've had nothing but water to put in her lips all day!"

"What was the matter with her?" Tod asked, convinced at length that Lena was not there.

"She have been ailing long—worse since the moon come in. The sickness took her with the summer, and the strength began to go out. Jake have been down, too. He couldn't get out to bring us help, and we'd none left."

Jake was the husband. The help meant food, or funds to get it with.

"He sat yesterday cutting skewers, his hands a'most too weak to fashion 'em. Maybe he'd sell 'em for a few ha'pence, he said; and he went out this morning to try."

"Tod," I whispered, "I wish that hard-hearted Molly had——"

"Hold your tongue, Johnny," he interrupted. "Is Jake your husband?" he asked of the woman.

"He's my husband, and the children's father."

"Jake wouldn't be likely to steal a child, would he?" asked Tod, in a hesitating manner, for him.

She looked up, as if not understanding. "Steal a child, master! What for?"

"I don't know," said Tod. "I thought, perhaps, he had done it, and had brought the child here."

Another comical stare from the woman. "We couldn't feed these of ours; what should we do with another?"

"Well : Jake called at our house to sell his skewers ; and, directly afterwards, we missed my little sister. I have been hunting for her ever since."

"Was the house far from here?"

"A few miles."

"Then he have sunk down of weakness, on his way back, and can't get here."

Putting her head on her knees, she began to sob and moan. The child—the living one—began to bawl ; one couldn't call it anything else ; and pulled at the green rushes.

"He knew Corry was sick and faint when he went out. He'd have got back afore now if his strength hadn't failed him—though, maybe, he didn't think of death. Whist, then, Dor," she added, to the boy.

"Don't cry," said Tod to the little chap, who had got the largest, brightest eyes I ever saw ; "that will do no good, you know."

"I want Corry. Where's Corry gone?"

"She's gone up to God," answered Tod, speaking very gently. "She's gone to be a bright angel with Him in heaven."

"Will she fly down to me?" asked Dor, his great eyes shining through their tears on Tod.

"Yes," affirmed Tod, who had a theory of his own on the point, and used to think, when a little boy, that his mother was always near him, one of God's angels, keeping him from harm. "And after a while, you know, if you are good, you'll go to Corry and be an angel, too."

"God bless you, master!" interposed the woman. "He'll think of that always."

"Tod," I said, as we went out of the tent, "I don't think they are people to steal children."

"Who's to know what the man would do?" retorted Tod.

"A man with a dying child at home wouldn't be likely to harm another."

Tod did not answer. He stood still a moment, deliberating which way to go. Back to Alcester?—where a conveyance might be found to take us home, for the fatigue was telling on both of us, now that disappointment was prolonged, and I, at least, could hardly put one foot before another. Or down to the high road, and run the chance of some vehicle overtaking us? Or keep on amidst these fields and hedgerows, which would lead us home by a rather nearer way, but without chance of a lift? Tod made up his mind, and struck down the lane the way we had come. He was on first, and I saw him come to a sudden halt, and turn his head to me.

"Look here, Johnny!"

I looked as well as I could for the night and the trees, and saw something on the ground. A man had sunk down there, seemingly from exhaustion. His face was a tawny white, just like the dead child's ; a stout stick and bundle of skewers lay beside him.

"Do you see the fellow, Johnny?"

"Has he fainted?"

"Fainted, or shamming it. I wonder if there's any water about?"

But the man opened his eyes; perhaps the sound of voices revived him. After looking at us a minute or two, he raised himself slowly on his elbow. Tod—the one thought uppermost in his mind—said something about Lena.

"The child's found, master!"

Tod seemed to give a leap. I know his heart did. "Found!"

"Been safe at home this long while."

"Who found her?"

"'Twas me, master."

"Where was she?" asked Tod, his tone softening. "Let us hear about it."

"I was making back for the town," (we supposed he meant Alcester,) "and missed the way; land about here's strange to me. Agoing through a bit of a grove, which didn't seem as if it was leading to nowhere, I heard a child crying. There was the little thing tied to a tree, stripped, and——"

"Stripped!" roared Tod.

"Stripped to the skin, save for a dirty old skirt that was tied round her. A woman carried her off to that spot, robbed her of her clothes, and left her there. Knowing where she must ha' been stole from—though you're accusing *me* of it, master—I untied her to lead her home, but her feet warn't used to the rough ground, and I made shift to carry her. A matter of three mile it were, and I be not good for much. I left her at home safe, and set off back. That's all, master."

"What were you doing here?" asked Tod, as considerably as if he had been speaking to a lord. "Resting?"

"Suppose I fell, master. I don't remember nothing, since I was tramping up the lane, till your voices came. I've had nought inside my lips to-day but a drink o' water."

"Did they give you nothing to eat at the house when you took the child home?"

He shook his head. "I saw the woman again, nobody else. She heard what I had to say about the child, and she never said 'Thank ye.'"

The man had been getting on his feet as he spoke, and caught up the skewers and the stout stick. But he reeled as he stood, and would have fallen again but for Tod. Tod gave him his arm.

"We are in for it, Johnny," said he aside to me. "Pity but I could be photographed—the Samaritan helping the destitute!"

"I'd not accept of ye, sir, but that I have a child sick at home, and want to get to her. There's a piece of bread in my pocket that was give me at a cottage to-day."

"Is your child sure to get well?" asked Tod, after a pause; won-

dering whether he could say anything of what had occurred, so as to break the news.

The man gazed right away into the distance, as if searching for an answer in the far-off star shining there.

"There's been a death-look in her face this day and night past, master. But the Lord's good to us all."

"And sometimes, when He takes children, it's done in mercy," said Tod. "Heaven is a better place than this."

"Ay," rejoined the man, who was leaning heavily on Tod, and could never have got home without him, unless he had crawled on hands and knees. "I've been sickly on and off for this year past; worse lately; and I've thought at times that if my own turn was coming, I'd be glad to see my children gone afore me."

"Oh, Tod!" I whispered, in a burst of repentance, "how could we have been so hard with this poor fellow, and roughly accused him of stealing Lena?" But Tod only gave me a knock with his elbow.

"I fancy it must be pleasant to think of a little child being an angel in heaven—a child that we've loved," said Tod.

"Ay, ay," said the man.

Tod had no courage to say more. He was not a parson. Presently he asked the man what tribe he belonged to—being a gipsy.

"I'm not a gipsy, master. Never was one yet. I and my wife are dark-complexioned by nature; living in the open air has made us darker; but I'm English born; Christian, too. My wife's Irish. We used to have a cart, and went about the country with crockery; but a year ago, when I got ill and lay in a lodging, the things were seized for rent and debt. Since then it's been hard lines with us. Yonder's my bit of a tent, master, and now I can get on alone. Thanking ye kindly."

"I am sorry I spoke harshly to you, to-day," said Tod. "Take this: it is all I have with me."

"I'll take it, master, for my child's sake; it may help to put the strength into her. Otherwise I'd not. We're honest; we've never begged. Thank ye both, masters, once again."

It was only a few shillings. Tod spent, and never had much in his pockets. "I wish it had been sovereigns," said he to me; "but we'll do something better for them tomorrow, Johnny. I'm sure the Pater will!"

As luck had it, a gentleman we knew was passing in his dog-cart when we got to the foot of the hill. He drove us home: and I could hardly get down, I was so stiff.

Lena was in bed, safe and sound. No damage, except the fright and the loss of her clothes. From what we could learn, the woman who took her off must have been concealed amidst the ricks when Tod put her there. Lena said the woman laid hold of her very soon, caught her

up, and put her hand over her mouth, to prevent her crying out; she could only give one scream. I ought to have heard it, only Mack was making such an awful row, hammering that iron. How far along fields and byeways the woman carried her, Lena could not be supposed to tell: "miles!" she said. Then the thief plunged amidst a few trees, took the child's things off, put on an old rag of a petticoat, and tied her loosely to a tree. Lena thought she could have got loose herself, but was too frightened to try; and just then the man, Jake, came up.

"I liked *him*," said Lena. "He carried me all the way home, that my feet should not hurt; but he had to sit down sometimes. He said he had a poor little girl who was nearly as badly off for clothes as that, but she did not want them now, she was too sick. He said he hoped my papa would find the woman, and put her in prison."

It is what the Pater intended to do, good chance helping him. But he did not reach home till after us, when all was quiet again, which was fortunate.

"I suppose you blame me for this?" cried Tod to his step-mother.

"No, I don't, Joseph," said Mrs. Todhetley. She called him Joseph nearly always, not liking to abbreviate his name, as some of us did. "It is so very common a thing for the children to be playing in the three-cornered field amidst the ricks, and no suspicion that danger could arise from it having ever been glanced at, I do not think any blame attaches to you."

"I am very sorry now for having done it," said Tod. "I shall never forget the fright to the last hour of my life."

He went straight to Molly, from Mrs. Todhetley, a look on his face that, when seen there, which was rare, the servants did not like. Deference was rendered to Tod in the household. When anything should take off the good old Pater, Tod would be master. What he said to Molly nobody heard; but the woman was banging at the brass things for three days afterwards.

And when we went to see after poor Jake and his people, it was too late. The man, the tent, the living people, and the dead child—all were gone.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.



## A RIVER-SIDE STORY.

BY K. S. MACQUOID.

"I AM told," said Mr. Severn Sparks, the chemist, to Mr. Chatterly, the solicitor, of Chesterford, "that our new Vicar may be shortly expected. He'll not go to the Vicarage, of course—Mrs. Lyndon and her daughter are there still. I suppose he'll put up at the Inn."

"No doubt—no doubt," and then the two worthies shook hands, and parted, with the comfortable feeling that they had settled the new-comer's arrangements in the only proper and possible manner.

There are very few lodgings to be had in Chesterford, but at the bottom of the straggling street leading from the market-place down to the river, a widow and her daughter, who rent one of the lesser houses, let a couple of clean, small rooms to single gentlemen—generally to artists or fishing amateurs. The house stands close to the irregular group of fishermen's cottages huddled together on the strip of waste land between the bottom of the street and the river, and is consequently very "handy" for the boats.

The widow's dark-eyed daughter had passed by Mr. Sparks and his friend while they spoke, and she smiled to herself at their words.

"Mother's right, then, after all," she said; "and it *is* the new Vicar. Well, I'm sure, we're honoured."

A strange clergyman had taken their rooms for a week on the previous night, and Mrs. Dean had intimated her suspicion of his being the new parson to her daughter, but had been laughed at for getting such a maggot in her head.

The lodger was standing at his open window, talking to a handsome blue-eyed boy, dressed like a fisherman.

"Then you go to school regularly, when it's not holiday-time?"

"Yes, sir; mother 'ud be rare and angered if I wurn't."

"Who is your mother—I mean what's your name, my boy?"

"Tommy Trantor, sir—fayther be Trantor the boatman." He looked up proudly. It was plain that the boatman of Chesterford was a well-known person.

"And what do you do with yourself in the holidays?" The boy's frank manner, and winning, smiling face took the stranger's fancy.

"Oh, I plays along of Sally, and sometimes I fishes, and sometimes"—the stress here suggested the intensity of the rare enjoyment,—  
"fayther he has me along o' he in t'boat, but there beant often room."



"Well, here's something to buy a cake for Sally. Good day."

The boy pulled his cap, and ran up the street.

The landlady's daughter had come in, and was taking away the breakfast things.

"That seems a fine little lad. Do you know him?"

"Yes, sir; everyone knows the Trantors—he's the best boatman in the place, and fisherman too, as to that."

"I suppose he's the person to employ if one should want a boat. A steady, sober man is he?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I wouldn't mention him to you if he were not. Poor fellow! every one likes Trantor."

"Why poor fellow?"

Miss Dean blushed.

"Well, sir, I let the word slip. One don't like to speak against one's neighbours, because, you see, sir, it might come round and make words again. But his wife, sir—her temper's dreadful. I'm sure if that Tommy wurn't the sweetest little fellow goin', he'd run away—she leads him such a life."

"Ah, I think of going down to Goodrich this morning. Will you direct me to Trantor's cottage?"

Miss Dean was delighted to be of use, and she immediately gave a voluble, though somewhat misty, description of the precise situation of the cottage.

"They're so in and out, it's puzzling to know one from another," she said; "but you're sure to find it now, sir—sure to."

When he reached the cottages, he certainly did find it puzzling to guess which was the boatman's. They were all alike; almost all had blue woollen garments hanging out to dry in front, and little children playing on the door-step, and these were the signs by which Miss Dean had assured him he would find the cottage he wanted.

While he wandered up and down among them, he might have been on his way to Goodrich.

"Can you tell me where Trantor, the boatman, lives?" he said, at last, to a child apparently older than those he had hitherto met with.

The little girl looked at him out of a pair of bright blue eyes. He had not seen her face before, it was so lost in the shadow of the pink sun-bonnet she wore, perched up at the back of her head. She was a pretty little yellow-haired maiden, a fisherman's child by her dark-blue frock and stockings. It seemed to the stranger that he had seen her face before.

"Fayther bides here." She pointed to the cottage in front of which she was standing; a curly-headed little rogue, much younger, was playing at her feet.

"Is he in now, can I see him?"

"No;" she shook her head sadly.

"Can't you tell me where to find him? Perhaps your mother can."

The little head was shaken again, and the childish face had a sorrow-struck, frightened look in it. The stranger waited for her to speak.

"Mother can't neither. She ha' been in her tantrums with fayther; and fayther he be gone away. He said,"—the poor little thing began to sob pitifully—"as he couldn't bear it, and he'd sooner be at the bottom of the river."

The blue frock was snatched up to hide her face, but the heaving sobs burst forth now, uncontrolled. "Oh! Johnny, Johnny, what will we do without fayther?—he don't beat us, he don't. Oh! what will we do?"

The curly-headed child stopped his play for a minute.

"Dunna cry, Sally—naughty gals cries;" and then he stirred up the dirt-pudding he had been making with a bit of stick, and squeezed it firm with his chubby clayey fingers.

A sound came from within the cottage, and when the stranger looked up, Mrs. Trantor was standing in the doorway.

It was easy to see that she had been very pretty; her little girl had inherited her blue eyes and bright-coloured hair; her features were good, and her skin had been delicate; there was an angry glow over it now, and an insolence in her curved upper lip, that confirmed the child's story.

"What may you be wanting?" she said, rudely.

The stranger looked at her gravely, and a tinge of shame showed itself on her face.

"I wanted your husband's boat for the day, but I understand he is not in."

A boat for the day—it was exasperating to lose such a job, and Mrs. Trantor's eyes flamed afresh.

"Just his luck!" she said, passionately; "he's gone off in his sulks because something or another put him out, and the Lord knows where he is or when he'll be in."

"But couldn't this little girl—or you have an older child, I think—go and find out where he is? Not far off, I dare say."

"It's like enough not," she said, bitterly. And she jerked her head towards the "Three Bells," a little low public-house, which stood handy for the fishermen at the corner, where the street ended; leaving a sort of esplanade between it and the river, partly built over by the cottages, and partly used as drying ground.

She came forward a little, and shading her eyes with her hand, looked up the river.

"There's that good-for-nothing boy, Tommy, I'll be bound, at play up there—but he'll hide by the bend of the river. The boy be going to ruin, sure and certain; he won't take a word from me now, let alone a blow."

"How old is he?" the stranger asked.

"Old enough to know better, sir. Come Michaelmas, he'll be thirteen—a fine strapping boy, too; but as hard as a stone, when he do take a thing in his head."

"Boys generally are," said the stranger, quietly.

She stood in open-mouthed wonder. She had expected the universal sympathy her neighbours gave when she and Tommy had had "words."

"You spoke of blows just now," he went on; "are you not aware that boys always get beyond a woman's control at that age? I mean that scoldings and beatings from you now will only serve to make the child uncomfortable at home, and will very likely drive him forth to seek bad company."

"That be fine doctrine." Mrs. Trantor threw back her head and sneered to her heart's content. "You an't got boys o' your own, that's certain, or you'd know they must be guided, if you mean 'em to keep a straight course."

"I quite agree with you there; but I tell you again that, as a mother, you will lose all hold over that boy if you are violent with him. Stay," he held up his hand to enforce her silence; "by violence, I mean more than striking him. I mean angry words and unkind, gibing looks."

"You don't know what you're a talking on." She would stop him. Nobody should keep her from speaking her mind. "A pretty thing to tell me how to manage my children. You've never even seen the boy."

"I have seen him, and I think he looks a good boy." He spoke more gently than ever. "But, still, he may prove an exception; he is, perhaps, a very bad boy; a liar, a thief; he drinks, perhaps, young as he is; but even if all this be the case, from your own showing, I think great allowance is to be made."

"How dare you say so?" The woman had grown so excited that she almost screamed, and one or two of her neighbours, attracted by the discussion, left their wash-tubs to listen, and stood now on the steps of their cottages, wiping the suds from their hands and arms. "Tommy be as good a boy as lives, unless he be put out of the way; and, for all he went off in a pet, he'll come home all right when he have had his play out."

"You seem a very violent person; it cannot be all right for your child to set you at defiance; if you managed him gently, you would do your duty by him, instead of tempting him to forget that which he owes you. I am a clergyman, and I advise you to think over what I have said."

Mrs. Trantor looked after him, subdued for the moment.

Then one of the neighbours made some jesting comment on her silence, and she darted at little Johnny, and gave him a smart box on the ear, for making his face so dirty.

She had four children and her husband to "do for," and yet her cot-

tage and her boys and girls were always fresh and clean. She was almost too energetic in her cleaning; she worked beyond her strength, and then vented her consequent irritation on every one who came within reach of her tongue.

The stranger made another inquiry for Trantor of a fisherman coming out of one of the cottages.

"It bea'n't narra a mossel o' use looking for he, measter; he be down beyont the bridge fishing."

"Never mind, I'll try and find him to-morrow," and he walked along beside the curving, winding river. "A dangerous bank for children," he thought; "not shelving even so much as a foot, it goes sheer down to the bottom. I expect lives are risked here constantly."

Half a mile further on, the road diverged from the river; he was unwilling to leave it; gorgeous-coloured dragon-flies darted in their sudden, right-angled fashion across his path; fluttering butterflies chased each other merrily, settling every now and then on the tall masses of willow-herb; but the prospect of inland country the road disclosed was so inviting that he followed it. One green wooded hill rose behind another, the foreground chequered with golden corn-fields and the emerald of turnips and mangolds; and beyond the hills again, melting into the horizon, blue distant mountains. He had ordered dinner at two o'clock, but it was past two before he reached home.

His landlady's daughter had her head stretched out of the upper window.

"There's something wrong up the river, sir. Will you please come here and see? I can't make it out."

The girl seemed beside herself with excitement.

"What is it? A crowd, or what?"

The girl made no answer; her eyes were strained in the direction of the river.

"Oh, oh! there were two black specks; now there's only one, and no one goes to help. Oh! run, sir! Be quick! Send some of the fishermen down, or the boy will be lost!"

The stranger hastened down to the cottages; but it was plain that help had been summoned before his arrival. Two men were running to the point where the boats were moored, and a crowd of women and children were standing in silence, just where he had found Sally Trantor.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"For the love of heaven, sir! go up and see," one of the older women said; "there be plenty on 'em, girls and boys, gone up to see what's a doin', but narra man among 'em; they be all away; you'll get there faster than the boat," she added, urgently. "It be up stream, and the light wherries be all out."

He was starting off, and then he stopped.

"Let a doctor know," he said, "and have hot blankets and hot water got ready in several of the cottages."

There was no need to ask where he was to go to ; the eyes of the group round the cottages were bent in one direction, towards the little bay, the swimming place of the village boys, hidden from sight by the bend of the river. Towards this point almost all the younger women, and a good many lads, were hastening. What the old women had told him was strictly true. The able-bodied men were all out fishing, except those two whom he had seen running down to the boats. He had soon overtaken one of the women, but he could get no clear explanation of what had happened. A lot of boys had been down at the creek playing, she said ; two had been seen far out in the water, and then one had been missed, and "then Jimmy Shuster ran screaming out that two on 'em was drowned, and calling for the boats, and then he run back again as fast as he'd come."

"You don't know who the boys are?" he asked, while he ran on beside her.

"No more than you, sir. I've a brother o' my own there, and it be as like to be he as another."

Soon the line of hurrying helpers was hidden from the anxious group by the cottages. The landlady's daughter saw farther, for her window overlooked the intervening roofs. She saw that the knot of figures she had been watching so long was joined by those who left the cottages, and that while some stood by the river's edge, looking down into the water, the rest seemed busily occupied with something, or some one on the bank.

"One is saved," said the girl to herself, "and one is drowned."

A few minutes more of suspense, and she saw the boat going up the river. The two strong men were pulling with their utmost strength, but the current was so full against them that they seemed to move slowly.

The girl clasped her hands frantically.

"Faster ! faster !" she called out to them. "You could go faster if you tried."

The wind which blew her words back in her face might tell her they had two foes to contend with.

But they were nearing the creek. Some one stood up above the group on the bank, directing the boatmen by his gestures. It was the stranger, her mother's lodger.

The boat was stationary now ; the men had put the drag out ; they were dragging just where the one black speck went down. But that was so long ago. Could there be any hope ? The girl thought not.

Several of the old women from the cottages had gathered below the window by this time, and called to her to know what was doing.

"Nothing ! nothing ! They lean over the side yet. Ah !——" She drew a long, deep, shuddering breath, for the men were pulling hard at

the drag, and the figures on the bank rushed close to the water's edge in confused excitement.

"For the love of mercy speak, gal! What d'ye see? Is it my Johnny?" says an old hard-featured grandmother.

"I can't tell one from others so far off. But oh! save us! They have pulled something into the boat, and they are rowing back so hard, you can't count the oar-strokes."

"Here's Mr. Severn Sparks a-running down."

"And here comes the doctor," called the old woman; and the apothecary of Chesterford, followed by the bustling chemist, came hurrying into the midst of the agitated group of women.

"Well, who is it?" they asked. "Which cottage?"

No one could answer.

The doctor was too quick-witted to wait. He turned at once towards the creek.

Some of the lads had kept pace with the returning boat, and he soon came up with them.

Just a few words. But the doctor's face was very sad as he met the boat at the landing-place.

Slowly and reverently the men stepped forth, bearing between them the senseless body, only half covered with their jackets.

"Some one go down to the bridge for Trantor," said the doctor. "Sparks, you'd better go to the other boy at the creek." And then he walked beside the men, cautioning them as to their movements, and the way in which they supported their burthen.

The news spread in an awed whisper. The old hard-featured grandmother who had feared for her Johnny hurried to Trantor's cottage, and reached it before the doctor did.

Mrs. Trantor had come out once or twice to ask for news; but she was busy, and she had not stayed with the rest, though she had made blankets hot to help her neighbours, if need were.

She hardly had time to take in the old woman's words when the bearers reached her door with their burthen. Without a cry or a tear she came forward to meet them. She spread a blanket on the floor ready to receive her boy, and then she stood silently beside the doctor, watching his attempts, and ready to execute his orders almost before they were uttered. Only a stifled throat-sob told that the issue of all this careful, incessant effort was more to her than to anyone.

Long and unwearyingly they persevered. The stranger had come into the cottage, and he saw that the doctor's face grew more and more anxious as the hours passed.

The doctor rose up at last, and beckoning for another blanket, laid it gently over the body; then he went up to the mother.

"I'm afraid it's no use, Mrs. Trantor; it's hard to give up hope; but I fear we must do it now. Poor little Tommy! he was a fine lad."



He wrung her hand, but she made no answer, and suffered him to lead her to a chair at the farther end of the room from the corpse.

Then he beckoned to some of the women standing round the doorway, told them to fetch him if he was wanted, and passed out into the street.

The poor woman flung her apron over her head, and sat rocking to and fro, while one or two well-intentioned neighbours poured into her ears such stores of comfort as seemed to them suitable.

"Cry out loud and ease your heart, poor soul! He's taken from the evil to come; he's with the Lord who made him."

But there was no answering voice of lamentation, only the silent rocking and the covered face.

Some of the neighbours had taken little Sarah home, and kept her from the fearsome sight, but she had escaped, and came running in, looking round for her brother.

She stood checked and awe-struck. She had been told that he had been in the water; but Dick Beevor had been in too, and he had walked home after a bit with the stranger and Mr. Sparks.

She looked up at the former now, and then she went to her mother.

"Mother, mother, what have they done with Tommy?"

The agony in the childish voice broke the spell that pressed on the poor woman; she pulled down her apron, and when she saw the little convulsed face, she clasped her arms round the child and wept passionately.

"You had best leave her," said the clergyman; "crying will relieve her, and her husband cannot be long now."

The women looked unwilling, but he spoke so earnestly that they followed when he led the way out of the house.

"Here comes the poor fellow," said one of the women. She pointed to a man who strode sullenly along, with his hat slouched over his eyes, at some little distance from the cottage.

Everyone knew that he had left it in anger that morning; and instinctively feeling that no one had a right to make or meddle between the bereaved pair, the loiterers disappeared from the pathway.

The fisherman stood in the entrance; he knew what must be in the only sitting-room, and he dared not face the sight.

While he stood hesitating, the cloth cap, which some one had hung on a peg against the wall, caught his eye.

His shoulders heaved convulsively; and then he leaned his head against the door-post, with a deep heavy sob.

The little girl started away from her mother at the sound, and she ran up to Trantor.

But he turned his face away, hiding it against the dark wood.

"Go out and play, Sally." Her mother's voice was so quiet that the child stared. "Let fayther 'bide a bit."

It was the first time in her life that Sally had been checked in caressing her father; but there was something so new in his sobbing silence and in her mother's gentleness, that she slunk away without remonstrance; not to play—the poor little heart was too full for that—she only went as far as the door-step, and there she sat, sometimes wondering why, when Tommy had bathed so often, on this one special day he should have been drowned, and then bursting into passionate fits of crying, as she remembered past play times, and how lonely she was now without Tommy.

For a few minutes after the child had gone out, there was silence within the cottage.

Then Mrs. Trantor rose up and went to her husband—

"Richard! oh, Richard!"—and her arms were round his neck, and she pulled his hidden face on to her shoulder.

There is no grief like a strong man's grief; it is terrible either to witness or to describe, and with Trantor's there was mingled a bitterness too deep for words to utter.

Only one murmur told her where the sting of sorrow lay.

"Oh, my boy—my boy!" he sobbed—"and I might have saved 'ee if I'd been nigher home."

All this while his wife stood still, bearing the weight of his heavy head on her shoulder; tears ran fast as rain down her cheeks, but scarcely a sob escaped. Every atom of the love the woman really bore her husband had gathered itself into the effort to bear with and soothe him now.

All that time she had stood helping the doctor, the clergyman's words had been stirring in her heart. She did not know how fervently he had prayed for her while he had been there, to all appearance an idler; but now every moment it seemed to her more clear and distinct that Tommy had been taken from her evil training and violent example. She dared not meet her husband's eyes; he must look on her as Tommy's murderer, for if she had not driven him away in anger this morning, he might not have gone bathing at all; and even if he had gone, his father would have been at hand to caution him about the depth of water, or to save him.

All at once Trantor raised his head.

"I'd like to look at him, Polly."

She lifted the corner of the sheet which the women had drawn over her boy, and the father looked once more on his little swollen face.

"Poor lamb!" he sobbed; "poor little lamb!"

He took his wife's hand and pressed it, as she covered the face again. At his touch her self-control gave way in one violent burst of sorrow.

"Oh, Richard, what shall I do? Don't you mind how I angered him this morning? I'd nigh struck him, but for little Sally; it's God's just judgment on my sin. I killed him with my hard words."

The man was roused by her agony. She had not even thrown herself into his arms for comfort, but stood there, her face buried in her hands, trembling as with ague.

"Hush, hush, Polly!" he spoke kindly, and put his arm round her. "You mustn't take on so; we mayn't guess ourselves why God does things. I'm crabbed too, at times, so I've no call to lay blame on you."

"But, Richard, mayn't it be that He have taken Tommy away from bad example? for I be sure he's gone to heaven if ever a boy went there."

Her husband kissed her, and then he stood silent.

"It may be," he said, after a while; "it's only parsons as can tell things o' they sort. But look here, Polly, this we can do for ourselves: we two can take heed, and not set a bad pattern by little Sally; she be all we've got for comfort now."

And the lesson was taken home and brought forth fruit at last. I do not mean to say that Mrs. Trantor was at once cured of her vixenish, violent ways and words—bad habits are unlearned little by little; to this day, I believe, she often has to struggle against her impatient Self-will and Self-love; for is not Self-love—the habit of setting Self first, to the injury and neglect of others—the cause of all evil impulses? But she tries hard, and she is helped by the counsel and encouragement of her good Pastor. At the inquest held on little drowned Tommy, the strange gentleman announced himself as the new Vicar of Chesterford, and his ministry there has been truly blessed to the little town.

Sally is never in tears now as she leaves her mother's door, and I do not think there is a more peaceful household among any of the fishermen than Richard Trantor's.



## ON THE BANKS OF THE WYE.

ON a bright, warm evening at the end of April I first entered the town of Ross, in Herefordshire. In itself no town could be more dull, uninteresting, and quiet: few towns can boast of a neighbourhood so attractive. In the past it is associated with the far-famed "Man of Ross"—a man "passing rich with forty pounds a year." The small house in which he lived may still be seen, though it is now almost in ruins. Its walls are covered with the names of hundreds and thousands of visitors—traces of the homage paid to one who has taught us so wondrous a lesson of Contentment. The town has many other pleasant associations with the past; and in the present and the future it is, and must continue, remarkable for its grand and beautiful scenery. From the windows of the Royal Hotel, I found the view a perfect burst of glory. The fine old river Wye rolling past majestically, winding in and out in the most picturesque and romantic manner; the green plains, bright with the tender freshness and beauty of spring; the small cottages dotted about here and there; the willows and reeds stacked up to dry in the fields; the far-off woods bounding the view, and leaving imagination to picture and wonder what lay beyond—all contributed marvellously to form a scene that could never be forgotten, and of which it seemed impossible ever to grow weary. A more intimate acquaintance with the neighbourhood only served to increase and confirm my admiration. The Wye itself, as you follow its windings for miles, opens at each step fresh beauties for wonder and for awe. It is teeming and overflowing, this beauteous river, with points both for poets and painter. Never have I so longed for the gift of a Turner's genius as when looking upon these wonderful scenes. The Wye, I think, may without exaggeration be considered the most picturesque river in England. The great marvel is, that, comparatively speaking, it is so little known and visited. The world rushes over to France, Switzerland, Italy—to all lands but its own beautiful and neglected spots of country. Of all the various places celebrated in the refined strains emanating from a poet's brain, or mentioned in the commonplace pages of Bradshaw, no scenery has so delighted me, so taken hold of my imagination and memory, as the banks of the Wye. The nearest approach to it was a hasty glimpse I once caught of the "banks of the blue Moselle," in travelling from Paris to Strasburg. It was certainly a wonderful view; it came and was gone so suddenly that I felt, when it was past, as if for one moment the gates of Paradise had been opened to my vision. These hasty glimpses some-

times take more effect upon one than a prolonged acquaintance does ; in the same manner as a face one sees but for an instant may haunt your whole future life.

The ruins on the banks of the Wye, scattered here and there, are amongst not the least of its attractions. One of them is especially impressed on my memory—the ruins of Goodrich Castle. We—I and a friend, John—had strolled out of the town on the afternoon of one of the brightest, and sunniest, and hottest days I ever remember.

"Suppose we go to Goodrich Castle," said John, and I heartily assented. After a walk of some distance, through the most exquisite scenery, a small copse or wood was reached. Upon emerging from this dark veil of trees, we again found ourselves by the banks of the river ; as if it delighted to surprise the world by its winding freaks. In front rose the noble and stately pile, Goodrich Castle ; and we both stood still and gazed in silence, scarcely daring to breathe lest the charm should break. A rude, but not unkind voice—that of the ferryman—dissolved the spell.

"Do you wish to cross, sirs?" he demanded, and we replied by stepping into his boat, which lay at hand.

"Have you many visitors here?" I asked.

"Pretty well, sir, in the fine months," he replied. "But not many, when you come to think of the beauty of the place. All the world ought to see it, and I'll be bound that ninety-nine people out of a hundred that you meet with have scarcely even *heard* of the ruins of Goodrich Castle."

"That may be true enough. I know it has been my experience of the matter."

We were soon landed on the other side of the river, and stepped rather reverently on to the grass. Quietly we ascended the slope towards the ruin, which seemed to gain in majesty and splendour as we neared it. We started some rooks ; they flew over the building, and in circles, round and round, as if unable to get away to a distance. Cawing and screaming, and flapping their wings, the air resounded with the strange, mournful sound. As we reached the first ruined archway. I looked up and saw seated above, a raven, fierce and fiery, grim and gaunt. Involuntarily the words of that wonderful piece of word-poetry came across me. "Are you," I cried, like Poe's raven, "perched above for evermore?" The bird bowed its head until I could almost have fancied it understood me. Then it flapped its wings, but did not move from its post ; we passed on, greeted with a farewell croak. I wonder what has become of it ? It seemed to have been there for centuries. What strange scenes may it have witnessed ? How many lovers' vows have heard recorded—how many to be fulfilled, how many to be broken ?

The scene upon which we entered was a very grand and solemn one.

The walls were decidedly in ruins, but massive, large and well preserved, We passed on to the slope beyond, where amongst the green grass rose the lesser ruins. We sat down, filled with the grandeur of the scene around. John, a young and romantic man, plucked a few flowers growing near him, and which happened to be forget-me-nots.

"Yorick," he said to me, "do you believe in the friendship of man for man?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Do you think it unmanly, undignified, even when carried to a romantic excess?"

"Surely not. Were David and Jonathan unmanly? And yet, where will you now find an example of such friendship as existed between them?"

"Could you entertain such friendship for some men?"

"I have dreamed of it, John. Yes, I do not doubt it."

"Take these flowers, Yorick," and he handed me the forget-me-nots he had picked. "Give me one in return. I, alone in the world, long for one true friend. Be that friend to me. Be my David, and I will be your Jonathan."

I shook my head. "I cannot, John. True I will be, please God, to every one, and to you, but we were never destined to be to each other as David and Jonathan. We differ too much in many of the main points essential to such friendship. You must seek further."

Years after, when I had found my Jonathan, I knew how rightly I had then judged. And I knew that he also was true, and that there are still some Davids and Jonathans in the world to keep up one's faith in human nature.

We had thus sat for an hour upon the grass, contemplating the ruins, listening to the cawing of the rooks, and talking in a dreamy and romantic strain, which may readily be pardoned if the surrounding influences are taken into consideration, when there came down a few startling drops of heavy rain.

The thick clouds had been gathering overhead unnoticed, until these drops warned us of a coming storm. We hastily got up, and sought shelter beneath one of the archways. At that moment a vivid flash of lightning was succeeded by a peal of thunder, which rolled and crashed around the ruined walls until my blood thrilled through me from head to foot. It was perhaps the grandest sight I shall ever witness in this world. During the whole time John and I never uttered a syllable, but we knew what was passing in each other's minds, as well as though we had been gifted with second-sight. For twenty minutes, crash after crash followed the vivid lightning with marvellous rapidity; and the rain descended in a stream, flooding the place. I had just begun to wonder if there was any chance of its abating, when a long dazzling flash seemed to fall from heaven, and immediately in front of us we



saw a tree felled to the ground. The lightning had struck it, and that which but a moment before had been full of life and strength, was now destroyed and useless.

"As the tree falls, so it shall lie," said John, reverently. And I trust that the lesson has never been forgotten by either.

As though satiated with its fury, the storm ceased, the clouds cleared away, the sun came out more powerfully than ever, and the prisoners were released. We crossed the water, gave "one last, long, lingering look" at the ruins, and wended our way back to the town. In passing through the churchyard, beautiful enough to have suggested "Gray's Elegy," we found the church open, and the building in possession of the cleaners. It was—and is—a fine old structure, large, solemn, and imposing-looking. What particularly took my fancy, in those days, was a huge vine-tree, growing inside the church, across one of the large east windows. It was, I think, a fitting ornament for the sacred edifice. Now and then, during the summer weather, a bird would fly in, perch upon the branches, and look round enquiringly on the multitude. Who first planted it, I know not. Most likely his body rests in the quiet churchyard; but, living or dead, I thank him for an act which awoke in me many sober and delightful thoughts.

"Yorick," said my friend, "I am in the mood for music. Come and play to me some of those grand and solemn passages which are only fitted for a church."

We went up to the magnificent instrument, and the sounds were soon swelling through the empty building, sending us both into ecstasies that so few know or dream of. For a whole hour John continued blowing for me, and when I joined him I saw that he had been weeping. I did not wonder at it; I knew him well. A better, a more noble-hearted, more manly fellow, never lived, in spite of the romance in his nature. And through all the troubles and trials which have come upon him since these days of early manhood, and through all its temptations, he has remained pure and upright; one of the few testimonies we have of the image of God in human nature. A little righteous leaven of humanity, that has sent me on my way rejoicing, with a joy that is second only to that Peace which passeth all understanding.

## KATE FOLEY'S REMAINS.

NOT many years since, in one of my summer rambles, chance took me to a place which, for the nonce, I shall call Lynton. It was situated in a valley famed for its romantic scenery—a stupendous chasm being one of its chief features—and was consequently often a resting-place for those who, like myself, were of an itinerant character, and loved to see Nature in all her different phases.

I entered Lynton at sundown, and that same evening I made the acquaintance of two young fellows who were also in search of the picturesque, one an artist, and the other a brother-chip. As I found them companionable, good sort of fellows, and as they, like myself, were bent on doing the lions of the locality, we agreed to fraternize. Accordingly, the next morning, after breakfast, we started on our tour of inspection.

We were advised not to visit the chasm on that day, but first to ascend the hills by a craggy path, see the view from their summits, and then descend, by another route, to a cascade, which we were told was worth seeing.

After a couple of hours' wandering on the hills, we descended, among beetling rocks, to a small dell, commanding a view of the waterfall. Nothing could be more inviting to three tired tourists, and down we sat on the green sward, and commenced an attack on the good things we had brought with us.

A place more inviting to an artist, more inspiring to a poet, or more alluring to an indolent and dreamy fellow, such as I was, could not be imagined. My artist-friend, whose name was Oram, as soon as his appetite was appeased, pulled out his materials, and began to sketch, while I and Goff stretched ourselves lazily on the grass, and commenced smoking.

It was a spot to produce thought and feeling, rather than conversation, and for some time Goff and I smoked in silence, while Oram industriously plied his pencil. Presently there was a rustling among the bushes, and, an instant afterwards, a large dog came bounding towards us, with a friendly sort of gambol; and then leaping around us, and dashing in amongst the bottles and glasses, seemed to be challenging us to a game of sport.

A few minutes later, I heard a clear, musical voice calling, "Nero, Nero! where are you?"

I started up. Just at that moment the underwood was thrust on one

side, and a girl, young and beautiful, glowing with health, and breathless with her chase after Nero, burst suddenly upon my vision.

The moment she saw us, she paused and drew back. How lovely she looked, as she stood there, with a soft blush suffusing her cheeks, her fine eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes! She was evidently alarmed—in that sort of beautiful disorder which is so enchanting in the young. She advanced a step or two, and then again hesitated.

I sprang to my feet, and doffing my "wide-awake," approached her, saying, "Pardon me, young lady, but your dog seems determined to make our acquaintance. He's a fine fellow, though rather rough, I should think, for a lady's dog." And, as if to sustain the character I had given him, Nero began to jump about me in a rather troublesome manner.

"Down, Nero! down! Quiet, sir!" and she menaced him with her finger.

Nero obeyed, at least for the moment. He lay down, looking from one to the other; then he whined, gave a short, sharp bark, and springing up, with his tail lowered, raced hither and thither, yelping and barking, as though determined to enjoy himself in spite of us.

At this moment another actor appeared upon the scene. It was a tall, aristocratic woman, considerably past fifty, and yet not old-looking. There was something about her tone, manner, and carriage, which instantly convinced me that I was in the presence of a gentlewoman. Nero seemed to acknowledge her supremacy at once, for his gambols ceased, and he sought the sheltering veil of the younger lady's skirts.

The old duchess (she might have been one, for aught I knew, so grand was her air), looked at us both inquiringly. I replied, in a few words, explanatory and apologetic, and she received them with dignified courtesy. She walked across the greensward, stopping to look at, and say a few complimentary words of, my friend's sketch; and then she and her daughter—the former with a stiff bow, and the latter in glowing and beautiful confusion—disappeared up a path on the opposite side of the dell. Nero accompanied them to the edge of the wood, and then turned round and looked at me, as though to ask if I was not coming too.

"Go on, old fellow," I said: "go on; you don't belong to me."

All the way homeward, and during the rest of that day, I could think of nothing but the beautiful girl whose acquaintance, if I may so call it, I had thus strangely made, and at night I dreamt of her. I awoke in the midst of it, but her clear, ringing voice was still sounding in my ear. I confess that this girl (the fairy of the dell, Oram called her), had made a deep impression on me. Her appearance, as she issued from the little wooded pathway, and the timid glances which, from time to time, stole out from under her dark eyelashes, were photographed upon my memory.

We started on the following morning for the chasm. As we passed down the street, just as we got opposite the gate of a neat white cottage, which I had before noticed, on account of its pretty garden and embowered porch, my friend Nero bounded over the gate, and came to my side, wagging his tail by way of welcome. He followed me some distance out of the town, and then reluctantly turned about and went homeward.

"That's a funny dog," said Goff. "Anyone, to see him and you, would think you were old friends."

"It is strange," I replied. "The only way I can account for it is by supposing that he takes me for some one he has formerly known."

"Possibly," was my friend's answer, and the subject dropped.

Entering the Chasm from the Vale of the Lynn, the sudden change in the scene was most striking. The green landscape of the valley, with its hills dappled with heath and gorse, its flocks and herds, and its richly-cultured meadows, was suddenly exchanged for solitude the most profound. Rocks, abrupt and vast, rose on either side.

It often happens that our first view of that which is celebrated, and of which we had formed an exalted, perhaps an exaggerated, notion, does not impress us as we expected it would, because it does not realize our preconceived ideas. It was not so in the present instance, for the scene was far grander than I had anticipated.

A mountain riven in twain: on either side precipitous cliffs, forcing their shattered and craggy heads into the clouds, and shaggy with the dark foliage which grew out of chinks in their sides, hung frowning over the narrow pass, and formed a scene unrivalled in romantic effect. I was obliged to stop and gaze—my mind seemed dwarfed by the contemplation of a scene so sublime. I tried to realize the stupendous power which could thus rend asunder these solid rocks: the mighty shock, as the riven mountain crashed over into the valley, shaking the earth to its very centre. The further we penetrated into the pass, where, at every winding of the little road, a fresh picture of huge and wildly-grouped rocks was presented to our view, the more imposing became the scene.

On we went, each moment the precipices becoming more and more rugged and majestic, as they, one after the other, enfolded us in their embrace, till we came to the two great features of the chasm—Heron's Crag and the Valley of Stones: the first a lofty precipice, and the latter a chaotic mass of black ironstone, scattered about in wild disorder.

I was gazing up with breathless awe at the towering crag when I was startled to see, close to its very verge, a solitary human figure.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "who is that up there?"

"That, sir!" answered the guide, following my gaze. "Oh! it's only Miss Kate."

"Miss Kate! What Miss Kate?" I asked.

"Miss Kate Foley, sir; she as lives at the white cottage with the pretty garden."

"Has she got a black dog called Nero?"

"She has, sir."

"She's mad!" cried Oram, emphatically. "It makes me giddy to look at her."

"There ain't no danger, as far as that goes," said the guide; "but as you say, sir, it's rather a maddish sort of a thing for a young lady to do; and there be some as says she is a bit crackey in her head, at times."

"Mad as a March hare," exclaimed Goff; "I thought so yesterday. She's a witch, and the old lady and the dog are her familiars. Look now!—there!—you see she's vanished; and didn't you hear a shriek in the air?"

"No!" I replied, "nor you either."

"But I did, though, or something very like it."

"I think your joke is somewhat out of place," I answered, rather tartly.

"You mustn't mind him," put in Oram; "he's nothing if he's not sensational."

"I beg your pardon, if I have offended you," said Goff; "but, seriously, I did hear something."

"The cry of a bird," suggested Oram.

"Well, the cry of a bird, if you like."

I was annoyed with Goff, and I was annoyed with myself for being annoyed; but as I felt a strange interest in the girl, which I did not wish them to notice, I thought the best thing I could do was to change the subject to some extent by asking the guide for some information as to her and her mother.

"Well, sir," replied the guide, "I can't tell you much about 'em, because nobody in Lynton, 'cept Lawyer Prowse, knows who they are, or where they came from. They come here about fifteen or sixteen months ago, and as I told you, people did say as Miss Kate was rather cracky, disap'inted in love, or something o' that sort; but there, to my thinking, the mother's the most singularlest of the two."

"What's the matter with her?"

"Well, sir, it ain't exactly what's the matter with her: you see, this is how it is: one day up drives a po'-chay to the King's Arms, and out gets the old lady, all alone. She goes to Lawyer Prowse, who'd got that white cottage to sell, and she there and then buys it, furniture and all, just as it stands, and pays for it in bank notes."

"That was rather an off-hand piece of business, certainly; but there's nothing so very singular in it after all."

"Well, it ain't exactly that, sir; you see, she pays ready money for all she has."

After a good deal of beating about the bush, I discovered that, in

Lynton, it was not considered good manners to keep your affairs to yourself; and as Mrs. Foley made no acquaintance, and paid for every thing as she had it, no one had an opportunity of making inquiries, in order to satisfy their curiosity as to her antecedents. This sort of reticence and exclusiveness rendered her, in the eyes of the good people of Lynton, a suspicious character; for, they argued, where there was secrecy, there must be something to conceal; and where there was concealment there must be something wrong; and from all I could gather from our guide, there never had been, since Lynton was a town, so fertile and yet so unsatisfactory a subject of speculation as Kate Foley and her mother.

That same evening, we were sitting after dinner, enjoying our tumblers of Irish whisky, when in rushed the landlord, with a face pale as a ghost.

"What's the matter?" asked Goff, who was the first to notice his agitation.

"Matter enough, gentlemen," he replied. "There's been an accident up at the Crag. A young lady has"—he paused, and then added, "fallen off, and been killed."

"A young lady!" I exclaimed; "not Miss Foley, I hope."

"That's who it is, sir: it's very horrible, isn't it."

"Good heavens!" cried Goff; "she must have fallen off while we were there. You laughed at me because I said I heard a shriek: now, what do you think?"

"Why did you pause, landlord," I asked, "and then add 'fallen off, and been killed?'"

"Because, sir, there be some as says she flung herself off."

"What has given rise to such a suspicion?"

"Why, sir, two young women as was coming home over the hills from Clearton saw her sitting among the rocks, crying. The moment she saw them, she wiped her eyes, and got up; but though she tried to be cheerful, her manner was, they say, very strange. About twenty minutes after this, they again saw her, this time mounted right up on Heron's Crag; the next instant she disappeared; how, they don't know; but they thought they heard a faint scream; at any rate, she's not been seen since, and ain't been home all day."

"Has any search been made?" I asked.

"Not yet; they are going up the Chasm almost directly."

"What say you?" I asked of my companions. "Shall we go too?"

"With all my heart," responded Goff. "Who knows but, after all, she may not be dead!"

We started, and found a number of persons assembled at the entrance to the Chasm. A few minutes later we were joined by several men, among whom was Hawkins, the man who had been our guide in the morning. They had brought poles and ropes, and other appliances for climbing, and we all started at a rapid pace.



At last we reached the foot of the precipice, and the search was commenced, and continued for more than half an hour; but though every rock upon which she could have fallen was climbed, and every rift and crevice searched, no sign of the poor girl could be discovered.

Heron's Crag was in the shape of an irregular V, and formed a sort of promontory, which jutted out into the valley. It therefore had two sides, and it was now suggested that though she had been last seen standing on the side we had searched, that on the western side the precipice was lower, and that if she had fallen or slipped, she would have rolled down on that side.

The idea was so feasible that we all started for the other side of the Crag. We had hardly, as it were, doubled the Cape, when my eyes were attracted by a fragment of a dress, or a shawl, or something of that kind, which, having been caught by a projection of rock, hung swaying and fluttering in the air. I called the attention of my companions to this, and they seemed to think it a harbinger of success. For my own part, I did not think so; on the contrary, when my eye first fell upon it, my heart sank within me, as up to that moment I had been cherishing a hope that after all it might be a mistake, and that I might yet see her, on our return, alive and well at her mother's cottage; but here was a too convincing proof of an accident having occurred to allow me to cherish that hope any longer.

At this point we met with another check. Anything descending in a perpendicular line from the shawl would fall on a sort of terrace or ledge of rock, about a third of the way down, and this could not be reached from below.

To make sure that, in case the body had fallen on the ledge, it had not rolled off, we searched minutely the rocks at the base of the precipice, but without discovering it. Still as if to urge us to fresh exertions, several of the bystanders affirmed that they could hear cries or groans as of a person in distress or pain. I listened attentively, and at last I did hear a noise of some sort, and whatever it might be, it evidently came either from the ledge or from the precipice above it.

There was now nothing left but to go up to the summit of the crag and descend to the ledge from the crown of the precipice.

We had, therefore, to retrace our steps, for there was no way of reaching the crag, except from the valley on the other side. By the time we got back to the village the sun had set, but the moon, which was just at its full, was already high in the heavens. After having obtained such ropes, stakes, and other materials as were necessary for descending, I and my two friends, with our guide of the morning, who was an experienced cragsman, again started on our melancholy, but exciting errand.

It was a night of extraordinary beauty; not a cloud dimmed the stainless blue of the heavens, and the moon, which had an almost tropical

brilliancy, bathed the whole landscape in a flood of clear but mellow light. Never was a more beautiful or more tranquil picture than that which met our view as we ascended the wooded slope which led us to our destination.

We had started with a goodly number of idlers ; but, when the path became more and more rugged and dangerous, these gradually fell off, till on arriving at the foot of the crag itself, we found our party diminished to six. I did not wonder at this, for though the light was bright and clear, the moon threw shadows about our path which were very deceptive, and which considerably increased the dangers of the ascent. Had I not been buoyed up by the hope that the cries and groans we had heard proceeded from the poor girl herself, and that if we persevered we might rescue her before she succumbed to the injuries inflicted on her by her fall, I do not think I should have pressed on so eagerly.

The path we now had to ascend was more steep and dangerous than any we had previously attempted. A slip or a false step would in all probability be fatal, and, to make matters worse, the side of the crag up which we had to climb was in deep shadow, and the ground slippery with dew.

"I think, sir," said Hawkins, "that we had better rest here awhile."

"I think so, too," replied Oram ; "and being of a provident turn, I've brought a flask of brandy ; so, in the meantime, we'll take a pull at that."

We had hardly done so when the long, whining, melancholy howling of a dog fell upon our ears. How this acted upon the minds and hearts of the others, I cannot say ; but to me it seemed that the sound came from the poor girl's dog, and that he was reproaching us for our delay.

"Time may be precious," I said, as I rose up ; "let us be moving."

With alacrity we all sprang forward, and in about twenty minutes found ourselves on the Crag.

We were now on a sort of plateau, and we had not advanced far when I was startled by the barking and yelping of a dog. In another instant Nero was by my side, manifesting evident tokens of recognition and satisfaction, and then, going on before us, he led the way to the very spot which the guide had marked for his descent.

The preparations for this were soon made ; a large stake was driven into the ground, some distance from the edge of the cliff, to which was affixed a long rope, of sufficient strength to bear the weight of a man, and of more than sufficient length to reach the ledge. Fastening the other end round his body, taking a coil of it on his left arm, and laying hold of the part attached to the stake with both hands, Hawkins threw himself over the brow of the cliff, and disappeared from our sight.

He had been over the precipice some minutes, and had made no sign, when a strange sort of presentiment came over me that, unless I

went down after him, something would go wrong. My friends, and the two remaining men, used all their eloquence to persuade me to give up the idea. It was of no use, however, I only laughed at their fears, and another stake having been driven in, somewhat to the right of the other, and all being ready, I prepared to descend. The shelving nature of the ground made the approach to the verge rather difficult, and I had not advanced three steps, when my feet went from under me, and I slipped down several feet, till I was brought up by the rope. This unnerved me a little, and I had to sit still for a moment or two to recover my equanimity. Then I launched myself over the precipice.

Hanging suspended from a high cliff, some hundreds of feet from its base, with nothing to prevent you falling among the rocks below but a small rope, is not a situation to be coveted, and my friends' warnings came across my mind with unpleasant distinctness. I looked down once, but dared not do so again, for the abyss appeared so deep and awful, that it made me dizzy. Shuddering to think what my fate would be if I should fall, I shut my eyes and clung tightly to the rope to prevent the catastrophe I had dreaded.

I had descended for some distance, but no ledge made its appearance, and I began to think I had been out in my calculation, and that my rope would not reach it. However, a few moments later I saw, a short distance below me, a broad bit of ledge which I knew was the one I sought, and the next instant I was safely landed upon it.

The first thing I did was to cast my eye along it for the poor girl in whose fate I was so interested; but I could see nothing of her—in fact, nothing but some pieces of rock which had fallen from the cliff above. I was just about to look round for Hawkins, when I heard on my left a loud halloo from below. I knew it must come from the guide, and advancing to the extreme end of the ledge, I called to know what was the matter, and what I could do to assist him. The voice came up from below. "Don't be scared, sir, I'm all right at present; I saw you coming down, so I waited. Can you hear what I say?"

"Yes," I replied, "perfectly well."

"All right; now listen. I missed the ledge. That I didn't mind, for I saw something down here as I took for a piece of poor Miss Kate's dress. But what's the matter is this; my rope's cut by the rocks, I can see the frayed strands about eight or nine feet above my head; but I'm all right, for my feet are resting on a crag."

"Well," I replied, "what do you want me to do?"

"I think I heard you say this morning as you was a bit of a sailor—can you tie a bowline?"

"Yes. What then?"

"You must go up; but I say, sir," he continued, "do you see nothing of poor Miss Kate on the ledge?"

"Not a sign."

"Ah ! I'm sorry, poor thing ! what can have become of her?"

"Go on," I said ; "what am I to do when I get to the top?"

"Loosen the line from your stake, and fasten one end to mine. Then make a bowline with the other end round my line, and send it down to me."

"I see," I answered ; "I hope it will be long enough."

"That's just it, sir," was the answer.

I reached the surface, how, I hardly know. I did, exactly as I had been directed, and when I had done so, I payed out the rope till I came to the end. I then called to him over the cliff, "All out ; does it reach you?"

"The answer was some time coming back, and then it came faintly :  
"No, too short."

"What's to be done now?" I asked.

"Are you afraid to come down without being tied?"

"No."

"Then, shift your line back to your own stake. Mind you don't let go the end, or I'm done for, for I can't stand here long ; and then lower yourself on to the ledge."

"I'm down," I said, when I had reached it ; "what now?"

"Is there anything you can fasten a line to up there?"

"Yes, a crag just like a cleat."

"Haul up as much line as will give you bight enough to make fast ; then call to them above to let go the upper end ; mind and hold fast when they do, that it don't strike you, and knock you off ; then make fast the end, loosen the bight, and lower this end to me." In a minute I had done all this, and with one end fast to my rocky cleat, I lowered the other to the brave fellow below. In another minute, to my intense satisfaction, I heard his voice : "All right ; make fast."

"It's done," I answered ; "what next?"

The only answer I got was a jerk on the line, and on looking down, I saw the guide with his feet pressed against the sides of the precipice, commence, hand over hand, his dangerous ascent. The look-down was so tremendous that I was obliged to draw back, and standing thus, I watched each strain on his rope as though my own life depended on it. Suddenly the line gave an extra jerk, and then the tension slackened altogether. My heart leaped into my throat, as I stood listening for a cry or sound ; I felt so sure that some horrible catastrophe had occurred, that I had not the power to move, so as to look down to see if what I dreaded were true. A minute or more elapsed, when, just as I was about to make a movement towards the edge to ascertain the real state of things, I fancied I saw the tension of the rope renewed. In another instant the pulls and jerks showed me that he had only been resting, and a few minutes later his head appeared above the side of the ledge. Aided by me, he scrambled to my side.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, as he threw himself down to recover his strength and his breath. "A tough night's work, sir; and all to no purpose."

"I see you've got the shawl, sir," he continued, noticing it as it lay on the ground.

"Yes," I answered; "I secured that as I came down the first time."

"It's Miss Kate's," he replied; "there's no mistake about it; I've seen her wear it hundreds of times."

I shall not stop to detail minutely how we reached the plateau, but merely mention that when we had done so, and got our traps together, Nero and the shawl, though I knew that I had brought it up with me, were nowhere to be seen.

Our efforts to recover the poor girl's body did not end here, but though they were continued next day, and for many days afterwards, and though a reward was offered by her mother for its recovery, or for any information respecting her, nothing was heard of Kate Foley, nor were her remains discovered.

POSTSCRIPT.—There was certainly something mysterious in this sudden and entire disappearance of Kate Foley. But, as I have always found that there is a solution to every mystery, I rested in the hope that in this case, as in all others, something would eventually turn up to solve it.

Time, we are told, works wonders, and patience has its reward; but three or four years passed over my head without anything occurring to aid me, so that I began to think Time, in this case, would not do his work, and that my patience was not to be rewarded. Still, it came at last.

It happened thus:—The acquaintance with Oram, commenced at Lynton, had ripened into a steady friendship. Goff was a very good fellow, and I did not drop his acquaintance. But he got married, while Oram and I were bachelors, and were thus thrown more together. It was a few days before Christmas, and we were sitting in his study, enjoying our weeds, and lamenting that we had no invitations for the holidays. We had just agreed to dine together at my chambers, when there came a loud rap and ring, and, a minute or two later, the landlady brought in a card, saying there was a gentleman waiting.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Oram, looking at the card, "bring him up—bring him up!" and then he went on: "The funniest thing in life; it's a fellow I've not seen for years!"

At this moment a tall, handsome man, of about five-and-thirty, entered the room, who, after being heartily welcomed, was introduced to me as Mr. Wentworth.

After a little conversation, I found that he had been travelling or living abroad for the last five years, but had returned home, and was living in Hampshire.

"I had some trouble to get your address, Jack," said Mr. Wentworth; "but I was determined to find you out, for I want to introduce you to my wife. You heard that I was married?"

"No," replied Oram, "I lost sight of you altogether."

"Well, never mind; I'm going back, the day after to-morrow, and I shall take you with me. You must spend Christmas with us."

"No, no," exclaimed Oram, "I can't do that. I'll come down for the New Year; but I'm engaged for Christmas Day."

"Nonsense!" I put in; "I'm not going to have you stop in town for me. Don't mind what he says, Mr. Wentworth; he can go if he likes."

"No, hang it! that won't do. You took compassion on me, when I had the prospect of nothing but a chop in my study, and I'm not going to leave you alone in your glory."

"Well," said Wentworth, "can't we make a compromise? Can't your friend come too?"

"Of course he can!" struck in Oram; "and, what's more, as you wish it, he shall."

At last I consented, and, two days after, we all three started from Waterloo Station, for Hack Hall, Mr. Wentworth's place; where we arrived just in time to be introduced, and then to dress for dinner. Mrs. Wentworth had two lady friends staying with her. Altogether, we made up a party of six.

Mrs. Wentworth was a nice-looking, very agreeable woman, but there was something in her manner that I could not make out; besides which, I seemed to have a vague idea that I had at one time or other seen her, or some one like her.

After dinner, when the ladies had gone up stairs—we had drawn round the fire, and old times came upon the tapis—Oram mentioned how we had first met at Lynton.

"Lynton!" exclaimed our host. "I know Lynton."

"It's a delightful place?" said I, "and I enjoyed my stay there very much."

"Yes," said Oram, laughing; "searching after the mortal remains of a young lady who, if I may be allowed the expression, seemed to have been spirited away by the old gentleman!"

"And were you successful in your search?" asked Wentworth.

"No," replied Oram; "but he very nearly left his own among the rocks as a monument of misdirected perseverance."

"Come, come!" cried Wentworth; "this is tantalizing. Let's have a true and particular account of the matter."

Accordingly I gave it, and when I had done Mr. Wentworth laughed most immoderately. When he recovered himself, he said: "You will think it strange; but, though Kate Foley was a relative of mine, and though I understood that she disappeared in a rather mysterious manner, I never heard a word of all this before."



"Kate Foley a relation of yours!" I was just in the act of exclaiming, when a servant entered the room, followed by a large black dog, who rushed in to welcome his master. I recognized the dog in an instant as my old friend Nero. "Why," I cried, "that's her dog—that's Nero!"

"Yes, that's Kate's dog; and when you go up stairs I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to Kate herself."

"What! Kate Foley?"

"No," he replied; "not Kate Foley, but Kate Wentworth."

"Nonsense!" cried Oram; "you don't mean to tell me that the amiable lady who carved our turkey is the very person whose remains we searched for among the Lynton rocks?"

"The very same!"

"Then, I think," said Oram, "it's our turn now to ask for a key to this mystery. Let us have a full, true, and particular account."

"You shall," replied Wentworth, and commenced thus: "Mrs. Foley, Kate's mother, was my father's sister, and, of course, my aunt. She was, I may say, a regular Wentworth: that is to say, she had a strong and resolute will. She married a Dr. Foley—a fine old fellow, a learned man, and a gentleman, but no more fit to have the management of money than a baby; and so my aunt managed both him and his cash-box, and during his life had her own way entirely. Well, Kate was an only child, and so was I. When we grew up we fell in love, and, with the consent of both families, we were engaged: in fact, the day for our marriage was fixed. But Dr. Foley died very suddenly, and the wedding had to be put off. My father was appointed Kate's guardian. This, somehow, brought the two Wentworth wills into collision, and they ended by quarrelling. My father, having the power, had his way; but my aunt, to spite us—for I and Kate had taken my father's side in the dispute—took herself and Kate off, unknown to anyone, and buried herself away in the country, nobody knew where. It nearly broke Kate's heart, but she was true as steel, and, spite of her mother's vigilance, she contrived, after a time, to write to me. You see, my aunt forgot that both Kate and I had the Wentworth blood in our veins, and were not to be circumvented after that fashion. I do not for a moment advocate a disregard of maternal authority; but I could not see why, on account of a caprice on the part of my aunt, a solemn compact which had been entered into by her and my uncle before his death, and which had occupied the poor old doctor's last thoughts, should be broken, and two persons made miserable for life. Therefore, as soon as I discovered where Kate was, I started off, and, as she wanted about six months of her majority, we agreed to wait till then; and eventually, on that memorable August morning, she took French leave, and eloped with me."

"But," I said, "did you not write to the old lady?"

"Yes; as soon as the knot was tied, both Kate and I wrote; but she

never replied. About a month afterwards, when we went down to Lynton, we found the cottage shut up and the old lady gone. After this Kate and I went abroad, and we heard nothing of her mother till one day, while we were at Lucerne, we had a letter from her, asking *us to forgive her*. Well, of course, after this, all was right, and my aunt acted the tender mother to perfection till her death, which happened about a year since. She was a strange woman, and I believe liked me all the better for having outwitted her. But come, let us go up to the drawing-room. I have no doubt you would like to have another, though not a last, look at Kate Foley's remains."

### THE HUNGRY SEA.

THE fierce wind drove o'er hedgerow and lea,  
It bowed the grasses, it broke the tree,—  
It shivered the topmost branch of the tree !  
And it buried my love in the deep, deep sea,  
In the dark lone grave of the hungry sea,—  
Woe is me !

The bonnie white daisy closed her e'e,  
And bent to the blast that swept the lea,—  
Blossom and grass bowed low on the lea,  
But white sails dipped and sank in the sea ;  
They dipped and sank in the pitiless sea !  
Woe is me !

'Neath the mother's breast in the leafy tree,  
Nestled and crept her birdies wee,  
Nor heeded the blast, though weak and wee.  
But no mother can save on the stormy sea ;  
Deaf to her cry is the merciless sea !  
Woe is me !

Oh, well for the fishers of Galilee,  
When they left their nets by that inland sea,  
To follow Him who walked on the sea ;  
At whose word the pitiless waves did flee—  
The hungry, insatiate waves did flee,  
And left them free !

Golden the light on flower and tree  
In the land where my sailor waits for me,—  
The country of heaven, that has no sea—  
No ruthless, moaning, terrible sea ;  
There is the haven where I would be !

FRANCES FREELING BRODERIP.

## OUR LOG-BOOK.

**S**HALL any excuse be required of us for devoting a few lines to this unique book of the Queen's, which during the past fortnight has been on the lips of us all? Or will our readers acquit us of blame for travelling for a moment from our proper province into that inner world of private interests and joys, and hopes, and fears, which, nevertheless, is as full of pathetic changefulness as the most tragic work of art? We feel that we need no excuse, and that it is our duty, as loyal and loving subjects, to record our impressions. The book is a gracious gift from a Sovereign to her people; yet its uniqueness chiefly consists in the truthfulness and trustfulness which so sets the woman above the Queen, that by a genuine touch of poetry, the lowliest record of every-day things in the past is converted into a clear burnished mirror, in which Englishmen and Englishwomen may behold their better selves—that in them which strives, aspires, hopes, and fears, and reaches forward to the perfect purity which, star-like, heralds perfect love. True it is that—

“ The past doth always win  
A glory from its being far;  
And orbs into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein.”

And no doubt much in the Queen's book derives a kind of lyrical value from the simple manner in which the past and the present are brought into touching contrast, as in the description of the pleasant visit to Taymouth, and the affecting note appended to it, with such a reticence that tells more than the best-chosen words could do. But the essential value of the book lies deeper—in the unconscious and unlaboured freedom with which it has been written, and the self-consciousness and self-denial which has drawn it from its place among the cherished treasures of the womanly heart to appear in almost every drawing-room in the land. There may often be a sort of secret half-sentimental pleasure in nursing one's own past, and the ideal that imparted light and beauty to all its details, and in softly shading it by the obscured glasses of artistic form to be the delight of others. But our Queen takes from its place what had lain nearest her own heart, and gives it away to lighten other lives, and help her subjects the better to understand themselves by appreciating humanly her loss, and placing themselves in her position, as she has sought to place herself in theirs. Viewed in the light of those pathetic changes which called forth the murmurs that doubtless led the Queen to agree to issue this journal, the commonest anec-

dotes and descriptions taken on a kind of dramatic hue, and we have, if not art, at least the substance in which art has its root. For all the scaffolding of royalty disappears; and as that ideal is the highest which is the most broadly human, we have here a lofty ideal, not elaborated through any arbitrary or foreign form, but enshrined in the events of a truthful and gently unfolding life, sympathetically related to all that can interest and aid humanity, and wondrously independent of those forms of rank and court amid which it is compelled to develop itself, yet which it brightens up with such a glow of tenderness, and nobleness, and purity as perhaps no female Sovereign ever before shed over the insignia of her office. It is this beautiful and unconscious consistency between inner and outer in the life of Queen Victoria that lends such a charm to this simple book. From first to last she has lived in such an atmosphere, and with such purposes, that she can afford to make all her people her confidants; and surely when she calls us to be witnesses against the ungallant and unworthy who have raised their voices in murmurs against the afflicted, whose high worldly station seemed to intensify instead of lightening the sorrow and the loss, it is our part to read faithfully and witness as our hearts direct us on her behalf. And surely no Englishman could read this work untouched; the highest lady in the land begs for justice, and the hearts and the honour of Englishmen are yet such as to prove that "chivalry has not vanished from the earth."

To turn from a record of real life, with a peculiar touch of poetry lying behind it, to one of Mr. William Gilbert's works, is perhaps as easy a transition as could be made in the present day from autobiography to fiction. Mr. Gilbert is noted for a peculiar power in so adjusting the focus of the imaginative *camera obscura* to single and exceptional groups of fact, that notwithstanding weird and morbid elements, the whole is caught and preserved with such an instant clearness, faithfulness, and colourlessness, that very often his most remarkable ideal creations might pass for pre-Raphaelite records of most minute and prolonged observation. Hence it is that Mr. Gilbert has been called the Defoe of our century. Yet there are some very remarkable differences. Defoe is uniformly most powerful when he projects the simple, common, and universal feeling into singular and exceptional positions, the details of individual experience being followed and represented with supreme care, each new mark or indication, however slight, like an acid biting inward, in wavering lines, slowly intensifying the first feeling awakened in the imagination. This is the secret of the success of "Robinson Crusoe," and more especially of the effect on the mind of that incident of the footprint in the sand. But Mr. Gilbert really works inward, where Defoe would work outward. Defoe imaginatively and dramatically suggests, and then works in separate details to confirm the suggestion; while Mr. Gilbert is the poet of psychology, and the transformer of exceptional moods and conditions into moral symbols, scarce ever awakening sug-

gestions in the imagination save through the relation and ultimate synthesis of his manifold detail. Defoe has a better chance of seizing the common sympathy; Gilbert will take a deeper hold of the student. Sometimes it requires not a little knowledge of exceptional moods in themselves to enable one to follow interestedly the current of inner meaning over the long gray bridge of seemingly arbitrarily assorted facts, till, looking back, the moral meaning flashes on the intellect at the end. And it is very surprising, that the critics' constantly comparing Mr. Gilbert with Defoe has had the effect of confirming him in the very points wherein he essentially differs from him,—chiefly in the tendency to heap up separate facts and details which receive no unifying light or colouring from the imagination till the interest of the common reader has become weakened, if it has not entirely flagged. The "Confessions" of the Magician, the Innominato, at the end of this new work, "The Wizard of the Mountain," is a typical specimen of this tendency. Mr. Gilbert is a moralist of a very peculiar order. He sees all the common elements of life reflected through prisms that distort and intermingle, and yet each part is preserved as a true representation; it is only the combination that is abnormal and strange, sometimes weird, and on it he hangs the rarest moral teachings, which never completely overbear the psychologic or semi-scientific interest. This is seen very clearly in "Tomaso and Pepina," and in "Don Bucephalo," and it is also the secret of the interest we feel in his mad people, both in "Shirley Hall" and "Dr. Austin's Guests." Had they really been genuine mad people, the books had both been oppressive. His skill is setting up one faculty against another—cutting several individualities in two, uniting the several portions, and then making the odd creations skirmish through one another, is truly a most remarkable one—unique, so far as we know, in literature, and well worthy of most careful study. Mr. Gilbert's power is weird and fascinating, but somewhat limited by its appeal to special classes; and the interest he awakens is scarcely commensurate either with his peculiarly original powers or his painstaking and most conscientious work. He ought in this respect to be the most popular author of the day. He can even project half his mind into another half of a condemned criminal's, and give us a mental record of the criminal's last four minutes, with all the slow, dry detail of an unimpassioned third party. "The Wizard of the Mountain" contains a number of stories excellently told, and with a dry crisp sort of humour, here and there disturbed and relieved by a ripple of pathos. Like Montillado, they leave a peculiar flavour on the palate. The moral teaching is of the purest and loftiest kind, and some of the stories, as, for instance, "Dr. Onofrio" and the "Magic Flower," possess powerful interest apart from the moral which runs clearly through them, yet which needs a little searching for. The grouping and arrangement of the book are admirable, and no one will regret making the Innominato's acquaintance and finding out how he came to possess such supernatural powers, and

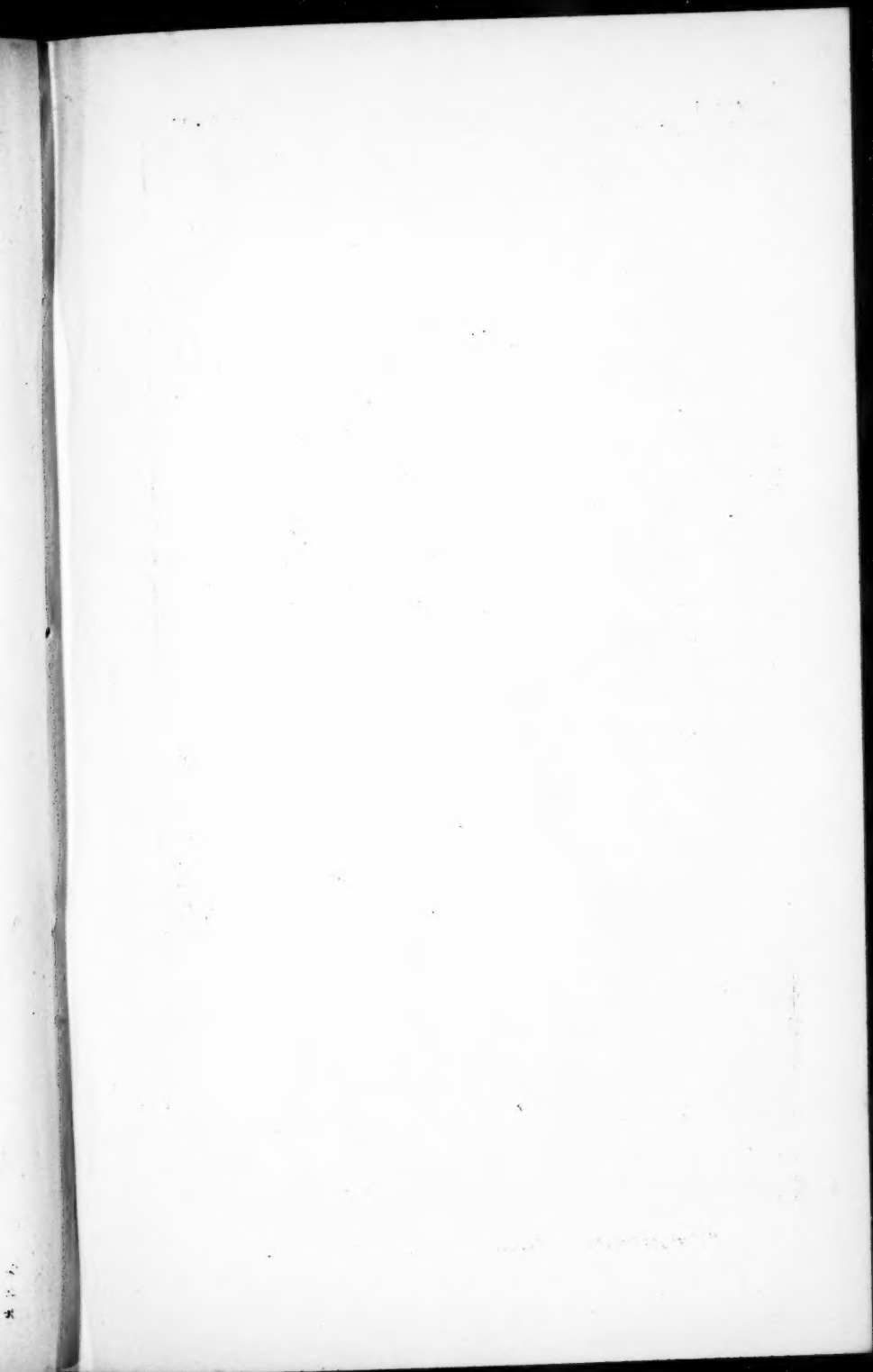


how his falseness to duty and to truth for the sake of knowledge and of power avenged itself upon both his spiritual and physical being. Some of the stories in the book will delight the run of readers merely as successful stories.

Miss Hesba Stretton, like Mr. Gilbert, has surprising power of analysis, but it lies in quite a different direction. She occupies herself with the action of distinct characters thrown into kindred circumstances calculated to develop morbid and exceptional frames of mind, and she shows great skill in maintaining clear lines of character amid all the tortuosity of these strange involvements of circumstance. Before she can be really successful in a three-volume novel, she must write a quiet story of real life, moving on healthfully upon ordinary levels; morbid and exceptional excitements from without being used sparingly, and only in the way of relief and shading. The backbone of plot in "Paul's Courtship," for instance, is tainted just a little, and not only that, but taints slightly the characters running nearest it, exactly as in some meat we occasionally get at second-class eating-houses. The idea of an ambitious, scheming woman forming the notion of securing her aim by exciting her two brothers to a double and aimless sacrifice, is original, and it is here wrought out with great subtlety. Poor Paul Lockley, who buries himself in his books because his cousin has supplanted him in the affection of his first love, and whose hand hovers towards the volume as Mrs. Margraf begins her suggestions as to the state of clever Doris' heart, is inimitably portrayed, and so is Atcherley, the deformed artist. But the best and most natural conception in the work is the poetic Mrs. Aspen, who, after many trials, is lifted into the position she deserves and desires; and whatever defects may accrue to the work as art from the author's peculiar mental tendency, the outstanding lesson is powerfully brought out, that scheming, even for others, when it ignores the peculiar inward needs of those concerned, can only by slow degrees defeat itself.

"The Savage Club Papers for 1868" is in some respects superior to its predecessor. Its object would disarm criticism, were it not that Mr. Halliday repudiates such a notion. But the volume may well stand on its own merit. Mr. Godfrey Turner, Mr. Halliday, and the pseudo Mr. de Jones, are very happy. Yet though the matter of the volume is sufficiently well varied, the sameness of style is remarkable. The *Saturday Review* is unique in this respect, but other forms of intimate association seem to produce a little of the same result. There is a sharpness occasionally almost amounting to abruptness, betraying a sort of corporate consciousness rather than self-consciousness; and that calm roundedness of delicate reserve which we find in our best classics vanishes before a determination after mere verbal play, keenness, and separate points. But the volume is so beautiful and replete with interest that we cordially recommend it.







"Have you forgotten me, Madame de Mellissie? I am Anne Hereford."